VARIETY IN THE PRAYER MEETING

WILLIAM T. WARD

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VARIETY IN THE PRAYER MEETING

A MANUAL FOR LEADERS

BY
WILLIAM T. WARD

INTRODUCTION BY
BISHOP WILLIAM O. SHEPARD

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TO

MY WIFE

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Preface	7
	Introduction by Bishop W. O. Shepard	9
I.	The Place of the Prayer Meeting in the Christian Church	15
II.	The Prayer Meeting Leader	27
III.	The Prayer Meeting Room	57
IV.	Advertising the Prayer Meeting	63
V.	The Opening Exercise	75
VI.	Prayer in the Prayer Meeting	83
VII.	The Prayer Meeting Lesson	101
VIII.	Prayer Meeting Testimony	113
IX.	Prayer Meeting Music	123
X.	Special Prayer Meetings	139
XI.	Some Other Things Worth While	161
XII.	The Benediction	179
	Appendix. Prayer Meeting Bibliography	189

PREFACE

He who made the world likes variety. We see that everywhere. No two leaves are alike, the stones differ, the flowers bloom in myriad hues, the clouds shift in wondrous panorama, "one star differeth from another star in glory"; each human face has its own peculiar features, each soul its own peculiar experience; and heaven itself, we are sure, will not be after a stereotyped pattern.

The fact that God's efforts are never formal, neither in nature or grace, in time or eternity, constitutes one reason why men love God's handiwork, why the "old, old story" as experienced in life and related in testimony is ever new, and why we shall enjoy heaven forever.

If our prayer meetings lack variety must we not in frankness admit that they are less than what God desires them to be, and should we not expect that men should fail in enthusiasm for them; and, on the other hand, if we build them as God builds his universe of nature and grace, shall we not more perfectly please him and more surely enlist and hold the interest of men? This question has but one answer.

To assist in the attainment of this fine quality this volume, containing plans and suggestions by the author and others, is sent forth with the prayer that, by its use, in some measure at least, the prayer meeting may increasingly become a meeting that has no place for dullness or formality, but one that throbs with life, a service new and fresh, bright and attractive, loved of men and blessed of God.

Liberal, Kansas. WILLIAM T. WARD.

INTRODUCTION

JESUS said, "Let not your heart be troubled," and in the same discourse he discussed with his disciples the greatest of all problems. In saying and doing so he taught that the gospel stirs the mind while it stills the heart.

To-day the Christian mind is stirred beyond question and precedent.

The screw-beaten ocean paths between neighboring continents; the complex of wire and illimitable oceans of Hertzian waves which bind the world into a community; the multitudinous literature which standardizes all thinking and feeling; the rising tide of democracy in America, Europe, Asia, and everywhere; the common interest of all peoples in the exploration and exploitation of all natural forces and treasures have made a new world, and none the less a new church. The church reads the Bible to-day in the light of the "new city," the "new philanthropy," social justice, brotherhood, missions, and a hundred clamorous isms crying from new platforms, "Lo! here" and "Lo! there."

The mind is mightily stirred, but is the heart stilled?

Who is sufficient for these things? Is the church, as now divided and more or less intent upon the growth of the various branches? Is even a united church, now so happily prophesied by so many overtures and courtesies, sufficient for the new world task?

The answer to this question forever must be in the negative. As from the beginning, "Our help cometh from God who made heaven and earth," and who by his providences has brought about the new heaven and the new earth of the twentieth century. It is true still that "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Without Him who wept over Jerusalem, and doubtless now weeps over Peking and Paris and London and New York; without Him who compassionated the shepherdless of Galilee, and doubtless has compassion on the myriads of unhoused, unemployed, uncomforted, unsaved of our time; without Him whose love constrained Paul to his mighty labors among all perils and hardships and oppositions; without Him who is Vine and Way and Life the church will go round and round without progress, like a boat

pulled by one oar with much agitation of the waters and exertion of the rower.

Our clearest-eyed prophets are saying, "Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." They are reminding us of the neglected might of intercessory prayer. They are reminding us of the strength as well as the glory of being "workers together with God." They are pointing us to the abiding truth that our sufficiency is in God.

Among the prophets who send out a loud call to the church is the author of this volume. While many in our day deal with the problems that press themselves for solution, he directs us to the source of all power and sufficiency. He writes not for the brakeman, but for the engineer and the fireman. He deals with the indispensable and fundamental.

This book will be found to be surprisingly suggestive. In the hands of an intelligent leader of the prayer meeting it cannot fail to be of very great value. Its suggestions intelligently used will kindle a multitude of fires on cold altars, and fan dying embers into a living flame.

The author writes in the strength of the inductive method. He knows because he has

tried and proved. His own success is the warrant of success to those who give the care and thought and prayerful preparation which he has given and which is evidenced by this fullest treatment, as I believe, which the prayer meeting has received.

May its cordial reception and judicious use wing a myriad prayers and petitions to the Throne of Grace and Power.

Kansas City, Kansas. W. O. SHEPARD.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."—*From the letter to the Hebrews.*

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—*Jesus.*

CHAPTER I

THE PLACE OF THE PRAYER MEETING IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

PARAGRAPHS

1-5. Its place in history.
1. Such a meeting to be expected.
2. In New Testament days.
3. In the early centuries.
4. In the Middle Ages.
5. In the Reformation Era.
6-15. Its importance.
6. Acknowledged.
7. Enhanced.
8-15. Not fully realized.
9. Socially.
10-14. Statistically
10. The statistical ideal.
11. The question, "How large?"
12. The true criterion.
13. The Sunday preaching service and the prayer meeting compared.
14. A standard proposed.
15. In the literature of the church.
16. An opportunity for the church.

CHAPTER I

The Place of the Prayer Meeting in the Christian Church

"My house is the house of prayer."—Luke 19. 46.

1. Prayer is essential for the Christian, while to meet for prayer is a privilege and pleasure as great for the soul as gathering around the festive board is for the body. No wonder the prayer meeting is found in the church through all its history.

2. The New Testament day had it. The one hundred and twenty prayed and Jerusalem had a pentecost (Acts 1. 12–26; 2. 1–47); "Peter and John," mark you, "Peter *and* John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer" (Acts 3. 1), a Jewish service, in truth, but, nevertheless, attractive to these two Christian men; the church prayed and Peter was delivered from prison (Acts 12. 3–19); and Paul and Silas prayed, the Philippian jail was earthquake shaken, and the jailer was converted (Acts 16. 25–34).

3. The early centuries of the Christian era had it—in the open when they might, in the seclusion of the catacombs and other places of retreat when they must.

4. The mists of the Dark Ages so obscured this service that it scarcely appears.

5. The Protestant Reformation revived the prayer meeting and has brought it to our day. Now, all the evangelical denominations sustain it chiefly as a midweek service which meets upon Wednesday or Thursday evening of each week.

6. Though this service as a rule is very meagerly attended, yet there is a conviction abroad relative to its importance: one says that the prayer meeting is the heart and soul of the church; another that if the prayer meeting succeeds all departments of the church will succeed; and another, that it is the spiritual barometer of the church—statements which embody much of truth; for the church has no service more fitted to be called its "heart and soul" than this; a successful prayer meeting, too, quickens the true social spirit, strengthens every great reform, deepens missionary interest and conviction, inspires larger financial endeavor, in fact, a successful prayer

meeting does bless every church activity; while as an indicator of spiritual life it may well be called the "barometer" of the church.

7. The importance, so admitted, is all the more enhanced in these days because of the fact that class meetings and kindred services for public testimony are not sustained as formerly.

8. Yet, while we praise it well, there are some things which indicate that we do not fully feel the force of our laudations—that we do not even yet adequately appreciate its importance or give it the recognition which is its due.

9. The social possibilities of the prayer meeting are not fully realized, and in some quarters are not realized at all. To mention a social service to many church members means to them anything but a prayer meeting; yet this service provides the great social opportunity of the church. Note its excellencies in this regard: There is no age test as when you announce a young people's service—the old, the middle-aged, and the young are free to come; there is no money test as must be the case when a money-raising social is announced; there is no sex test as is true when a

women's or a men's meeting is held; there is no educational test as must in the nature of the case be in training classes and educational meetings—the unlettered have opportunity here; there is no official test as is implied in the meeting of the official board or session. Age, money, sex, education, office—these do not constitute a passport here: as wide as human need, as wide as the gospel invitation, so wide is the prayer meeting welcome. Besides, as compared with the Sunday public service it provides the larger opportunity for intimate acquaintance, for the reason that it is, more than it is possible for the other to be, the great family gathering of the church; furthermore, many socials, so called, meet intermittently, and, for long periods only occasionally, while this service meets regularly once a week, and that, too, at the time best adapted for social gatherings, namely, in the evening, thus providing a constant and favorable social opportunity. The minutes before the opening provide opportunity for the joyous greeting of acquaintances and the introduction of strangers, while delightful social fellowship is possible in the minutes during which the company should always tarry after dismissal. The

church has no service that compares with this in social possibility. We will do well to improve it.

10. Statistically, the prayer meeting does not loom up large; in fact, it does not loom up at all. Pastors and lay officers are required to report figures for church membership, church finances, Sunday schools, young people's societies, brotherhoods, woman's societies, and periodicals, but not for attendance upon their prayer meeting. If they make a record of this it is because they themselves choose to do so, their own pleasure and interest prompting them in the matter. Perhaps the fact that the attendance upon this service has been so meager has prevented the churches from requiring such a report; yet the necessity of making it, no doubt, would have incited multitudes to larger interest and more definite action relative to this service, and would still do so. The statistical ideal, we are ready to admit, is not the highest; yet it has the advantage of being so tangible that men readily recognize it when it is placed before them; and this is of profit, for, it is better to recognize an ideal and fail in its attainment than not to recognize it at all. Of course, the might of

prayer is not to be measured by the mere size of the crowd; yet all must concede that a church with many in its prayer meeting is more nearly ideal than one whose midweek service is supported by but a few.

11. "How large ought my prayer meeting to be?" is a legitimate question for every prayer meeting leader. Let us acknowledge at once that all fields do not respond to the prayer meeting idea with the same degree of alacrity. So many elements enter into the problem that the same effort applied in different places produces different results; the same leader may have a large prayer meeting in one place and a small one in another. Notwithstanding this admission the question remains for every leader, for the simple reason that there is room for improvement, no doubt, in every field; and, as long as this is true, the question will still remain. The leader cannot, of course, guarantee results; he is not expected to do that; but in the face of his opportunity it is his duty to put his best self into the service, and that not spasmodically but incessantly. If he does less than this, and his service falls short because of it, he is by that much responsible for its failure. Each leader's prayer meeting ought to

be as large as the opportunity plus his effort can make it.

12. The true criterion of prayer meeting attendance, since the prayer meeting is, in a special way, the gathering of the church family, is not the mere number present, but rather that number as related to the total membership of the church. It is not "how many," but rather "what per cent." Some churches with a large prayer meeting in mere numbers, compared with others by the per cent standard, might not make so favorable a showing.

13. The public preaching services vary in their per cent of attendance. The environment of the church, whether city, town, or country, its location in the same, the distance its members live from it, the age of its membership, and the desire they have to avail themselves of its privileges largely determine how well its services are to be maintained; but it may safely be said that, as a rule, the larger the church the smaller the per cent of attendance upon its preaching service. There are happy exceptions, of course. A church of forty members can more easily have a one hundred per cent crowd than a church of four hundred members. The fact is a large propor-

tion of the churches of Christendom do not attain a one hundred per cent attendance in their preaching services. Some are out of the community, some are sick, some are sinfully indifferent, and the transient churchgoer does not attend in sufficient numbers to make up for the absentees. The congregation which sustains a one hundred per cent preaching service throughout the year is to be congratulated. But, though attendance upon the regular preaching service comes short of one hundred per cent, there are several reasons why prayer meeting attendance should be even smaller: (1) The prayer meeting is a midweek service. (2) The unsaved of the community are not drawn to it in such large numbers. (3) Fewer transients attend. (4) Many church members who will attend the Sunday services have no desire to attend the midweek service.

14. The twofold fact that attendance upon the Sunday services of the church as a rule is less than one hundred per cent of the membership, and that, for evident reasons, prayer meeting attendance must be still smaller, does not justify the feeling that any sort of response to the prayer meeting invitation will do. Evidently that feeling has been abroad

too much already. The response has been meager. The prayer meeting is small—too small. No argument is needed to prove it; it is a fact universally admitted. How small? Answer: average attendance for the year, five per cent, ten per cent, fifteen per cent, yes, in some cases, twenty per cent, and occasionally, twenty-five per cent. Very well. But all things considered, ought not our prayer meeting attendance equal thirty-three and one third per cent of our church membership? At least, would we not do well to set that as a standard and give ourselves to its attainment? That per cent would provide incentive for all; it would be achieved by multitudes; and many who would fail in fully realizing it would be encouraged by the fact that they had come nearer reaching the standard than if computed upon a one hundred per cent basis. Let it be known that when a church's prayer meeting attendance equals thirty-three and one third per cent of its membership that church has a one hundred per cent prayer meeting, at once a new thrill of interest will quicken the pulses of the membership of that church. The possible inspires effort; the hopelessness of achieving the impossible paralyzes it. Thirty-

three and one third per cent equals one hundred per cent! That is possible! To the possibility of attaining such an ideal, let the churches add the requirement of annual reports as to attendance, and the prayer meeting, no doubt, will come into a new day.

15. Again, we write myriads of books upon other phases of the work of the church, but so far but little space is required of our library shelf to hold all the volumes that have been written upon the prayer meeting.

16. Our failure to recognize the importance of the prayer meeting socially, our refusal to recognize the prayer meeting statistically, and our slowness to create a prayer meeting literature reveal the need which constitutes the opportunity for the church, which, if improved, will make the prayer meeting what it ought to be, while the church as a result will become as never before in her assurance "clear as the sun," in her character "fair as the moon," and in the might of her power "terrible as an army with banners."

CHAPTER II
THE PRAYER MEETING LEADER

PARAGRAPH
17. The pivotal man.
18. Shifting responsibility.
19. Four phases of subject.

THE LEADER'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
20. Necessary.

THE LEADER'S PERSONAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PRAYER MEETING
21. Belief in it.
22. Love for it.
23. Enthusiasm concerning it.
24. Expectation for it.

THE LEADER'S WORK IN PREPARATION
25. A general before the battle, he plans.
26. He studies.
27. He prays.
28. He trusts.

THE LEADER IN THE MEETING
29. The question of apology.
30. A general in the battle, he leads.
31. Posture.
32. When to begin.
33. Make service largely voluntary.
34. Complaining.
35. As to being glad, and saying so
36. Dealing with blunderers.
37. Meeting "breaks."
38, 39. Securing variety.
38. Leader responsible for.
39. How to obtain.
40. As to introducing new things.
41. Monopolizing the time.
42. Superfluity of comment.
43. Giving definite tasks.
44. Surrendering the meeting.
45. Making the prayer meeting really such.
46. The "at home" character of the meeting.
47. Exalting God and his Word.
48. The invitation to accept Jesus.
49. Time, how long?
50, 51. Closing.
50. When?
51. Exception.

CHAPTER II

The Prayer Meeting Leader

"I have chosen you, and ordained you."—John 15. 16.

17. Mr. Moody once said, "Where one fails in the pulpit, I believe fifty fail in the prayer meeting," a statement the truth of which should challenge every preacher, for in the organization of the church of to-day the preacher is responsible not only for the Sunday but for the midweek service as well. He is the pivotal man in both. Our Sunday schools have their superintendents, our class meetings their lay leaders, our brotherhoods, clubs, women's societies, and young people's organizations their presidents, but the headship of the prayer meeting inheres in the pastor. When these other organizations fail the pastor in a measure escapes whatever reflection is attached thereto, but when the prayer meeting fails he is the responsible head involved. Yet we fail fifty to one, and, what is

worse, we are all too often content to have it so. Part of the justification of Mr. Moody's statement lies in the fact that as pastors we feel the importance of and give ourselves to preparation for preaching, but we do not so insistently feel the importance of nor so definitely give ourselves to preparation for prayer meeting leading. We make the Sunday service; we let the prayer meeting happen. We succeed in the one; we fail in the other. When we occasionally fail in the one we blush; when we continually fail in the other we take it as a matter of course; and until we as leaders feel the importance of this service and give to it time and effort, we may expect it to continue largely as it is.

18. The wise pastor, however, not only refuses to minify the relation he bears to his prayer meeting, he also refuses to shirk the responsibility it lays upon him. He invariably leads his own meeting. Laymen of marked ability, superannuate and supernumerary ministers, and fellow ministers who occupy high positions in the church may be present, but he will not yield his prayer meeting privilege any more than he would yield his pulpit privilege; nor would they, if they be wise, take affront at

his failure to do so; if they be not wise there is all the more reason for him to walk in the path of his own duty. His people look to him for leadership and he will not disappoint them. In shaping his meetings he will be glad to recognize his brethren, lay and clerical, and, in his absence, will commit the service to the leadership of some layman or minister, and will help the one chosen by urging his people to give the new leader the same hearty support they accord him.

19. To the prayer meeting leader—the pivotal man—four things are vital: his personal experience; his attitude toward the prayer meeting; his work in preparation; and his work in the meeting.

THE LEADER'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

20. The first necessity of a prayer meeting leader is a personal Christian experience. "As the priest, so the people" can truly and appropriately be modified into "As the prayer meeting leader, so the prayer meeting company." Now, in God's great plan the leader is responsible for his personal experience. Since this is true, should he discover any lack in his life, knowing that Jesus has provided abundance

of grace, that God is anxious to bestow it, and that the Holy Ghost is eager to bring it, let him give himself to God with abandon, and by faith claim the riches of "the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Thus will he become a Canaan dweller. The milk and honey, the figs and pomegranates of that goodly land will continually refresh his soul. There will be about his life joy and cheer and warmth. He will not be known as an Israelite weeping by the rivers of Babylon, but as a disciple in the full flush of a pentecostal experience. King David's experience, "My cup runneth over," will be his also; and the people who come into his meeting will know it is so, and more, they will share the joy of his overflowing heart.

THE LEADER'S PERSONAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PRAYER MEETING

21. It is possible for a man who really loves God to feel that, after all, the prayer meeting does not amount to much. This feeling, of course, is fatal to every prayer meeting interest and endeavor. However much observation may tend to confirm that opinion, yet the prayer meeting leader who would succeed

must keep his faith in the possibilities of this service—he must believe in this means of grace. If he is tempted to doubt its worth, let him again take a glance at Jerusalem stirred after the ten-day prayer meeting, or at Peter led out of prison by an angel in answer to the prayers of his fellows, or at the quaking Philippian jail when Paul and Silas prayed, and his doubts as to the worth of united prayer will be effectually dispelled. Moreover, if he will but open his eyes, there are answers enough to united prayers in these days in missionary triumphs, in revival victories, in personal life to mightily strengthen his faith. This faith, when attained, is of the sort that, when an organized class, the choir, some club or other society desires to use the prayer meeting hour for its own purpose "because all the other evenings are taken," refuses to consider the great midweek service a convenience which may be shifted at anybody's and everybody's will, but a necessity which not only merits but must have right of way.

22. The leader must not only believe in the prayer meeting, he must love it. He must look for its coming as those who wait for the morning. When he sings, "Sweet hour of

prayer, sweet hour of prayer," it should be not merely with his lips, but with his heart also. Now, love can be cultivated, and, if any leader finds he is lacking in this affection as related to the prayer meeting and will set himself to the beautiful task of nurturing it, he will find it grow to his heart's comfort, and the service become, instead of a weekly grind, a weekly delight.

23. Faith in the prayer meeting and love for it must eventuate in enthusiasm concerning it. It will have a place in the leader's thought and conversation, at home and abroad, and this even though his meeting be big in numbers or small. A friend of the author's knew this secret. When he took up a certain pastorate he found no prayer meeting. He at once announced the service, but when the evening arrived, no one but himself came. He sang and prayed, and rejoiced in God alone. This he did many weeks. Meanwhile Sunday by Sunday he kept telling the people how glorious the prayer meetings were. He was not misrepresenting, either, for he knew what each of us should know, that is, how to have a prayer service by one's self and enjoy it. Finally, one day at the Ladies' Aid Society one woman

raised the question as to who had been going to prayer meeting. It developed that none of those present had been there. They decided to go, and on the next prayer meeting night the pastor's cup of joy was full when his Ladies' Aid Society marched in. A great revival followed. A pastor's enthusiasm over a series of prayer meetings where he was the only attendant won the day. Enthusiasm bestowed upon this service is never in vain; it is a never-failing magnet—it always attracts.

24. The leader must expect his meetings to grow. And why not? Faith in and love and enthusiasm for the service, together with the fact that prayer meeting attendance in all the world is very meager not only makes possible but should incite that expectation. Sad indeed that so many leaders do not seem to have any thought about the growth of this service. They do not seem to see the possibility. What an opportunity for accomplishing something tangible they miss! Two hundred members in the church and but ten at prayer meeting! Could not ten more be persuaded to come? If so, a one hundred per cent gain could be reported; and if twenty more would come a two hundred per cent gain would be achieved. That

would be something to shout over. That possibility is found in thousands of the churches of our day. The leader should have the vision of that possibility as it applies to his own prayer meeting; and when he has it he will have a heart big with expectation till that vision is realized.

THE LEADER'S WORK IN PREPARATION

25. The leader in preparation is a general before the battle, and as such does not leave the meeting to the caprice of mere chance. The field and the forces engage him. He plans. The next meeting is in his thought; he also has in view the campaign for weeks to come.

26. He not only formulates plans, he sets himself to the work of preparation for their execution. He studies, and in doing so does not hesitate to use all available helps. Knowing that books and periodicals are published and sold for use, he acts accordingly. The prayer meeting talk may not require the effort in quantity the Sunday sermon does; but it receives its due share in quality. He not only prepares for the meeting by the study of books but also by observation of things and of men. He is constantly on the alert for ideas and

suggestions from all sources. Conversation with Christian workers, and attendance upon the midweek and Sunday services of other congregations, upon conferences and associations, conventions and institutes, provide many things which find their way into his midweek service. Thus he measures up to his prayer meeting privilege as well as to his pulpit privilege; and in so doing, the more nearly realizes the ideal of the true minister of the gospel.

27. He prays. He is well acquainted with God and they talk together about the meeting. He tells God of his disappointments and praises him for his triumphs; he whispers into the divine ear his deepest wish for himself and for his people; while God, in turn, pours out upon him the fullness of his grace and makes him a man with a burning heart, a man with an overflowing soul.

28. Having planned and studied and prayed he trusts it all to God, being willing that his plans may, under the immediate leadership of the Holy Spirit, yield to something else. Victory is his before he enters the service. It could not be otherwise. And whether one or many come God receives glory.

THE LEADER IN THE MEETING

29. If anyone called to this high privilege should esteem it so lightly as to come before his company at any time with indifferent preparation, and should be tempted to apologize therefor, let him refrain; no need to take time for that humiliating procedure; the service itself very likely will advertise his failure and publish his shame.

30. The leader in preparation is a general before the battle; the leader in the meeting is a general in the battle. In the one he must command himself; in the other he must command others. But when he commands it must be by saying "come" and not "go." He must have the spirit of the great "Commander," who is also the "Good Shepherd." In Protestantism the age of the dictator is past. Our people think. They have feelings. They have rights. Our prayer meeting folks are men and women. They do not come to the service to be driven, but to be led. To this end they gladly place themselves under the care of the leader, who they think will measure up to his privilege. They want new vision; they want to be taken to the heights; and happy is that leader whose spirit, manner, and word is,

"Come with me and we will together see the delectable mountains."

31. As a general he should always stand unless he be upon his knees with the company in prayer. The leader who announces a hymn and then drops into a chair so that he can readily see the faces of only a few, or worse still, sits down in a pew with his back to the company, is in a fair way to lose the battle. An alert leader standing upon the floor, where face readily meets face, commands. Countenances speak when voices are silent, and the standing leader can tell from the faces of his people how the battle goes. He is readily aware of impending defeat and can bring up his reserves. He is equally aware of victory and is enabled to push it on to greater triumph. More than this, while there is help in the faces of the company for him, there is also help in his face for the company. Outside of seasons of prayer there are only two occasions when the leader should sit down: When special music is being rendered, or when some one else is presenting the Scripture lesson or some other special subject.

32. Begin on time. God does. Sunrise never lags. If the prayer meeting conforms to

this good rule, it must be because the leader wills it. The leader who is at home when the second bell rings is sure to have a tardy meeting, for a late leader means a late people. It is no excuse to say the people are not there. The janitor, no doubt, is there, and he is enough to begin with; and if he fails the leader may and should begin with himself. An acquaintance of the author's went to his first Sunday evening service in a new pastorate. The ringing of the second bell found only the janitor and himself present. He announced the hymn. They sang. He prayed. The service proceeded. The congregation sifted in through the progress of the exercises. They seemed chagrined. They had never seen it after this fashion. The former pastor, a good man, had been accustomed to wait for them; the new pastor evidently was going to be different. Suffice it to say, he never had to begin a service with only the janitor again. The thing this preacher did on Sunday evening should be done on every prayer meeting evening, regardless of how many are there. Begin on time. Because the prayer meeting crowd is smaller than the Sunday crowd the temptation to wait will be greater, but the

leader must not yield to it. There is something thrilling in the fact that when the time of opening arrives and the bell ceases ringing all the people of the church community, the shut-ins, women and children in their homes, men in their places of business, those whom necessity requires to be absent for the evening, the careless ones—all know that their pastor is on the floor in the midst of the battle. Such promptness appeals to the business man, it fits into the busy housewife's plans, and is approved by all. If the leader is there ten or fifteen minutes early he will have an opportunity not only to see that the room is arranged, that the hymnals and Bibles are in place, but also to extend to his company a cheerful greeting as they come; and besides, he himself will avoid the distracting rush incident to a last-minute arrival.

33. Make the service largely voluntary. Some have been brought up in churches and families where the privilege of taking part publicly has not been dwelt upon or encouraged; some desire to take part, but speak brokenly and are afraid of criticism; others are timid; and some, in truth, are willing to be present. but do not desire to speak at all. To

call upon such will bring a response on the part of some, of course, but others will make it an excuse, though they may not publicly admit it, for remaining away. In fact, if it be generally known that it is the custom to call upon anyone and everyone indiscriminately, many will never risk themselves in the meeting. It does not adequately cover the situation to bluntly say that everybody ought to get salvation enough to enable him to gladly take part. That may be true; but we must admit, however, that a very high degree of piety is not incompatible with a large measure of silence. It is very much better to have a large company, many of whom are not accustomed to take part audibly, than to have a small company, all of whom are willing to be heard in the meeting. Those whose training and disposition have not led them to take audible part cannot but be helped by the prayers and testimonies of the others; and, as the weeks come and go, the joy and privilege of using their own voices in a definite way in the meeting will become more and more apparent to them, and many of them will, sooner or later, break their silence by giving their voices as well as their hearts to prayer and

praise. (See "To get new voices to pray," paragraphs 90-94, in chapter on "Prayer in the Prayer Meeting.") Let this be the working rule in this matter: Call only upon those whom you know it will not embarrass, and on them only occasionally.

34. The complaining note is depressing. It is stifling. Love and faith will not grow in its atmosphere; good cheer vanishes when it comes in. The wise leader will avoid it. Many are absent; there are apparent reasons for complaining, but apparent reasons should not evoke certain chastisement, especially when such chastisement falls upon the innocent and does not help the absentees who may deserve it or who may not. Very likely some are culpably neglectful of duty and privilege; better see them privately. Others are necessarily detained. Sickness of themselves, of family, or neighbors, urgent business or social demands, or absence from the community—reasons the leader does not know, and, if he knew, would accept, and not only that, but would act upon himself the same as they, if placed in their stead—serve to keep them away. Under such circumstances it is better to keep still. The meeting sometimes fails to

move as it should. Hold steady. It is unlikely that everyone will do as he should, even in a prayer meeting. Some fall short of and others go beyond our expectations. Occasionally nearly everything will seem to go wrong; but whatever happens, the leader must keep his poise. Others may fail, that is their affair; but if the leader complains, he fails also, and that is his affair. It should not be. The prayer meeting may not grow from week to week as it might; but it will not help much to complainingly remind the people of the fact. It is much better to seek the causes of stagnation, and these, when found, may not call for a public complaint, but may rather provide an occasion for humiliation and heart-searching, and require for their remedy the wise, patient, and loving attention and care of the leader.

35. It is wise to commend, approve, and praise. When a half dozen come through the pouring rain, forget the absentees and tell those who have come how much cheer they have brought into your heart; when they respond readily and the meeting moves easily, remind them of the beauty of such a service; when the meeting grows from week to week,

brag about it; in short, keep your eyes open for something to be glad over, and, when it appears, not only be glad, but say so. The people will like it; it will engender enthusiasm; and the company will feel like coming again.

36. The wise leader will not take too seriously the bad blunders that some people, inadvertently or otherwise, make. He knows that prayer meeting people are just like other folks and is not surprised, therefore, if some time, somewhere, somebody "breaks out." If the offender is known to the company, they very likely expect something of that sort in the course of time. If he is a stranger possibly there are extenuating circumstances, which, if known, would call for pity rather than censure. "Smile and keep sweet." If insinuations are offered, make no defense. Here is no place for argument. Sing a stanza. If the blunderer mixes some good thought with his remarks, a thing he is very likely to do, with a word of comment magnify that good thought, disregarding the blunder. The people will be with you. The wound devotion has suffered will readily heal.

37. Anyone who undertakes to lead a prayer meeting for any considerable length of time

will sooner or later meet what is known as a "break." For no apparent reason, the response in prayer and testimony will be slow or cease altogether, the meeting drags, the continuity of the service is interrupted, and the tide, instead of going on to flood, begins to ebb. At such a juncture it devolves upon the leader to "fill in." The thing to do is something else. If testimonies drag, to your knees; if prayers fail, swing into testimony; call for Scripture promises; have lively and inspiring choruses at your command; read some clipping you may have saved for just such an occasion; propose some live question which will wake up the lagging powers; drive home the answer with a stroke of comment, and ask another question. Never consent to retreat; always advance, even though it must be by another way. If "breaks" come into your prayer meeting, fellow leader, it is your happy privilege to make short work of them.

38. If the prayer meeting is to be characterized by variety, it must be because the leader wills it. If he consents that the same brother shall pray first every week and that the same sister shall testify second, that the same songs be sung from time to time, and that the whole

program be so stereotyped that the absentees know precisely what is happening up at the church at any given minute during the prayer meeting hour, it will be so. Initiative looking to variety must be exercised by some one, and even though there should be persons among the prayer meeting attendants who have the vision of it, yet their opportunity for impressing it upon the meeting, because the part that each attendant contributes to the meeting is so meager, is small indeed. The leader is the one person who can adequately exercise such initiative; and happy is he when he discovers that fact and sets himself to the performance of it.

39. In seeking variety it is best not to introduce too many new things in one meeting. One new thing in any one service is enough. In fact, many services will not have nor do they need any distinctively new thing; but the sense of newness, freshness, and variety will be gained (1) by varying the arrangement of the parts of the service, (2) by a change in emphasis from one part to another, or the absence of it, (3) by employing in the meeting, as far as possible, persons who may not have taken active part for some time, (4) by omit-

ting some feature for a time and then taking it up again, (5) by special prayer meetings, and, (6) above all, by the spirit the leader and the company put into the service.

40. When introducing something new, do not remind the company of that fact. Build your services as God builds his days. The shifting of winds and slant of sun, the commingling of heat and cold, the ever-changing clouds, the coming of seasons that bring in turn the gray, the green, the red, the gold—these and some other things besides, some we call new, some that are old made over, God puts into his days, so that the last day is wholly unlike any other; and men enjoy them all and want to live in them forever. God does not build his day to put variety into it; he puts variety into it to build it—and he does it without a herald. It would spoil it if God should say, "Now we will do something different." His days speak for themselves. Build your prayer meeting so, and men will like it as they do the day. They will not come to see the new thing, but to enjoy the light and life, the blessing and beauty of it all; and if, perchance, they say, where you may hear, or perhaps where you may not, that they never know

what is going to happen in your prayer meeting or what is coming next, they will have paid you a compliment of the very highest order.

41. It is possible for the leader to talk the prayer meeting to death. In fact, that has been done all too many times already. The truth is that the large per cent of us preachers are of such ordinary caliber that when the people hear us preach twice upon Sunday they are content and do not care to hear us upon the prayer meeting occasion; and we ourselves should not give any place to vanity, for if we cannot pack our churches upon Sunday, how can we expect to do so in the middle of the week? The prayer meeting is the people's service; it provides their great opportunity for definite expression in the public worship of God. The leader should recognize this fact, and more, he should emphasize it; and when he exhorts the people to give each other a chance by being brief, he himself ought to heed his own exhortation; and this not only in reference to his "talk," but in reference to his own prayer as well.

42. Not only should the leader observe brevity in the personal contribution he makes to the meeting, he should also avoid the bad

habit of commenting upon every testimony and verse of song. If comment be opportune, he should give it, but in the part of the meeting when others are invited to speak he should be sure to cultivate, for a part of the time at least, the fine art of being a good listener.

43. The leader should not only provide the opportunity for the members of his prayer-meeting company to take part, he should also give them something definite to do. If he desires, he may find many tasks to assign. For instance, have them read the Scriptures in unison or responsively, or, select some one or more to do it; assign questions or topics relating to the theme for short discussion; request the company to bring passages of Scripture relating to an announced topic, and to bring clippings from their current reading relating to the same; constitute committees for definite tasks; enlist others in selecting hymns; have one give the meaning of a hymn, another a short account of the life of its author, another the story of its writing, and another some incident connected with its use; invite those who have the gift of song to render special music; when slips or tracts are to be distributed have others do it; by these and

other methods he will help the people to a larger part in the service.

44. Do not at any time say, "The meeting is yours," and sit down. To do this is to surrender the meeting, and you are not called upon, nor is it wise, to do that. The company does not expect or desire it. Give them the privilege of prayer, of testimony, or of taking part in any way, but you lead. They will carry the battle better if you do; and besides, new developments may demand a change in the plan which it is your place as leader to direct.

45. It is possible for the prayer meeting to degenerate into a service of another order. For instance, the missionary prayer meeting may become a mission study class, or an educational prayer meeting may become a forum for the discussion of educational topics. Special subjects should be presented in the prayer meeting not for the purpose of disseminating information merely, though that is of great importance, but for disseminating information with a view to prayer; and it is the duty of the leader to see that this purpose is realized. The crown of the prayer meeting is prayer, and it should never be

crowded out. All things that come into the service should minister to the spirit of devotion.

46. Of all the services of the church there is none that partakes of the family character as much as this; hence the wise leader will emphasize the "at home" characteristics of the meeting. If the room is large and the company small, have the people sit close together; if there is a pulpit, don't climb into it; be conversational in style; talk to people by name; pray for the sick and bereft by name; talk church family affairs; do not smother emotion, tears of penitence or of gladness, holy laughter, and shouts of joy have their place in the Christian's life—we were made to feel as well as to think; be glad when some one out of the exuberance of his heart or out of the need of his life speaks or prays more than once; have a warm heart for the stranger; and diffuse through the service that benign spirit of homelikeness which has no place for stiffness or formality, but makes possible richest friendships and most glorious fellowship.

47. The prayer meeting company gathers to commune with God. Give him right of way. Seek only his will. Exalt Jesus his Son. Exalt

the Holy Ghost, the Comforter whom he has sent. Exalt the Word of God, which is his revelation. Without God your prayer meeting may have form; but only with him can it have life and power. And you can have him. You may lack numbers. You may lack conveniences. Your church may be at a low tide spiritually. But, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." You have the two or three? Very well. He is with you. Love him. Magnify him. Exalt him. You will find rest for your tired bodies, peace for your troubled minds, and comfort for your sorrowing souls; with him you will forget things and circumstances that otherwise would disquiet and annoy; you will lose the depressing note; with him you will have cheer and joy, you will have triumph and glory.

48. When the prayer meeting, by reason of unsaved persons in it, provides opportunity to invite souls to Jesus, the leader should make use of it. The unsaved who come to such a meeting are, no doubt, in sympathy with it. They have respect for religion, and possibly would like to know the Saviour. If they continue to come they will most surely, sooner

or later, form an acquaintance with him. Happy is that leader and company who do not wait for the annual revival to win such for the Master. Provide opportunity for requests for prayer, and when they are made, follow them up. Be bold for the Lord. Invite such as respond, and any others who will, to come forward and definitely surrender to God at once. Let the company understand that in this as in all other services of the church they are at liberty to go through the congregation and personally invite their unsaved friends to come to the Lord. Embarrass no one, saint or sinner. When the seeker comes forward let the company gather about him and by their sympathy and prayers help his faith. He is a prodigal on the way home. Lead him to break with sin definitely and unrevokably, to surrender to Jesus completely, and to trust him for salvation fully. Coming so he will find the heavenly Father's pardon, he will find himself "a new creature"; glory will fill his soul and shine in his face. Then rejoice together, and give praise to God, for it can be said of him as it was concerning one of old, he "was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

49. Hold one hour. Many will be willing to spend an hour who would be unwilling, and perhaps would find it impossible, to spend two.

50. Close on time. God does. Sunsets never drag. Some may quietly object, but no matter. The days are too short for some dear people. Others will feel that it is almost wicked to close when there are so many to take part and the meeting has so fine a swing. The leader should close on time nevertheless. The reason is obvious. Under this plan the business man knows he can make after prayer meeting engagements and be sure he can fulfill them without the embarrassment of leaving while the service is in progress; school teachers and school children know they will have an after prayer meeting opportunity to complete their preparation for the next day's work; and the mother with children she cannot bring, knowing definitely when she can return, can make arrangement for their care during the hour. It is no use to exclaim that it is the duty of business men, school teachers and pupils, mothers and everyone else to go to prayer meeting regardless of business, school, home, or other affairs. Perhaps it is; perhaps it is not. That depends. The plain fact is

that a service with an uncertain end, which stands more chance of being long-drawn-out than otherwise, cannot be a big service, that is, in numbers, permanently. The crowd may be caught for one meeting, but not fifty-two times a year. It is better far to have a rule, work to it, and have a large company, than to work haphazard and have the few who find it satisfactory to follow such a plan. Moreover, the prayer meeting that closes with persons ready and eager to take part is one whose reserve force and unused power exhilarate and promise good.

51. There should be but one exception to the above rule, and that is when the time for closing arrives and finds a seeker for salvation who is minded to continue. Then simply announce that if any must go they may do so without offense. With this word those who go will do so freely, while those who stay will do so by choice. Stay by the battle joyfully, thanking God for a seeker, and for one who is minded to seek till he finds. Let the meeting lengthen—into hours if need be—God once lengthened a day that a battle might be won. When victory comes your joy and God's will be of kin.

CHAPTER III
THE PRAYER MEETING ROOM

Paragraph
52. Accessibility.
53. Cleanliness.
54. Tidiness.
55. Rearrangement of furniture.
56. Illumination.
57. Temperature.
58. Ventilation.
59. Flowers.
60. Effect.

CHAPTER III

The Prayer Meeting Room

"The place whereon thou standest is holy."
—Joshua 5. 15.

52. The place where the prayer meeting is held is of large import; albeit some congregations, judging by the place they assign it, do not seem to think so. There is some truth, but not all, in the statement that "If the heart is right one will go to prayer meeting anywhere." The Christians of Diocletian's time went joyfully to the catacombs for prayer, and vast multitudes to-day, if placed under like conditions, would do the same; but why should we seek the obscure place in this age? We are not the subjects of persecution. Necessity does not compel us to hide our prayer meeting. To tuck this service in an out-of-the-way place is to act out of harmony with the day in which we live. The prayer meeting room should be easily accessible.

53. The room should be clean. And why not? Ours is a clean gospel. It makes clean

folks. And a clean gospel and clean folks are worthy of a clean place. A dirty room means discord; it is out of harmony with the spirit of the prayer meeting; and, if countenanced, will help kill the meeting. The floor should be swept; the seats should be dusted; and cobwebs should have no place on the wall. Cleanliness is one of those fine blessings, which, if men will but pay the price may be had anywhere.

54. The clean room may have its furnishings in a jumble. This should not be. It should be tidy. We are often told that "Order is heaven's first law"; be that as it may, it should be one of the laws of the place of prayer. The chairs, tables, and other furniture should be in place; the blackboard, if movable, and the pictures upon the wall should hang straight, and the books should be in the racks. Anything that interferes with the sense of tidiness should be removed.

55. It is not essential to tidiness that the furniture of the room always be in the same place. Indeed, tidiness can be maintained while a sense of newness and freshness may be obtained by occasionally rearranging the furniture if this be possible. Move the desk

to the other end or to one of the sides of the room. Shift the chairs accordingly. Move the organ. Rearrange the chairs so that sections and aisles will be different. Those who enter the room will be pleased in the same way one is pleased who enters the home of a housekeeper who knows and practices this fine art. The rearrangement of the furniture alone will give variety to the meeting for a time.

56. The prayer meeting room should be well lighted. One may hardly expect a bright cheerful prayer meeting to thrive in a half-lighted room. Darkness depresses both men and meetings; light uplifts both. The tint of the wall has much to do with the lighting effect. The passages leading to the place of meeting, whether entry, hall, or connecting rooms, should also be well lighted. Prayer meeting attendants should not be compelled to grope through a tunnel of dark to find the place of prayer.

57. See to it that the room is warm in cold weather. Building the fire thirty minutes before the service usually means a failure for that evening. The early fire means a larger fuel bill, but it is worth all it costs. In warm weather have a fan for everybody.

58. Look to the ventilation. Prayer meetings may be smothered by foul air; besides, there is fresh air a-plenty in God's out-of-doors, and you sin against him and the meeting if you do not use it.

59. A bouquet of flowers upon the stand always blesses.

60. When the prayer meeting attendant steps from the outside into a clean, tidy, well-lighted, comfortable, and, consequently, a homelike place, that sense of quiet restfulness so necessary to intimate communion with God steals over his soul, and the meeting for that evening is already on the way to victory.

CHAPTER IV
ADVERTISING THE PRAYER MEETING

PARAGRAPH

61. It is wise to advertise.
62. Character of prayer meeting advertising.
63-74. Methods.
63. The pulpit.
64. Church bulletin.
65-67. Blackboard.
65, 66. Inside.
67. Outside.
68. Local papers.
69, 70. Letters by leader.
69. Circular.
70. Special.
71, 72. Invitation by company.
71. Personal.
72. Phone and letter.
73. Tracts.
74. Illuminated sign.
75. The meeting itself an advertisement.

CHAPTER IV

Advertising The Prayer Meeting

"Go home to thy friends, and tell them."—Mark 5. 19.

61. If it is a good thing to advertise soaps and silks, meats and medicines, hats and houses, why is it not a good thing to advertise the prayer meeting? There is but one answer to this question, for the aphorism, "Advertising pays," is true not only in the material but also in the spiritual realm. Those who are fearful that if the church takes up with the ways of the world she will lower her spiritual life and lose her power should remember that every right thing is subject to legitimate use by God's people. Advertising is right. True, the devil has taken hold of it and has used it with great profit to himself. His astuteness commands praise; his zeal commendation. Nor should his remarkable success in the matter make God's people loath to attempt it; it should rather incite them not only to attempt but to such persistent

endeavor as ends only in accomplishment. Advertising pays. Good people as well as bad should make use of it.

62. Prayer-meeting advertising cannot, nor is it desired that it should, take on the spectacular flaming-poster, ring-the-bell brass-band features ofttimes made use of elsewhere; but there is a field for sane, forceful, and persistent advertising, legitimate for this service, as the following paragraphs show, which, if cultivated, will enlist not only the people's interest in but their attendance upon this means of grace in increasing numbers.

63. First of all, the pulpit should exalt this service. The pastor should not consume time which should be given to other parts of the Sunday service in an extended exhortation relative to the prayer meeting; there is no need for that, and besides, the people would tire of it. What he says and how are of more importance than the length. Let him in a few sentences lay the matter upon the people's hearts not merely once in six months or a year, but frequently. Let him mention some special feature of the last meeting; some special feature promised for the next; call attention to the increasing interest and growth; invite

the fathers and mothers to bring their children; in short, let him enthusiastically urge the privilege the midweek service affords the whole church. It is wise for him, occasionally, to provide an opportunity for the people to definitely commit themselves to prayer-meeting attendance. To this end he will find it advantageous to distribute slips through the Sunday congregation about a month before the revival with the request that all, whether they have been accustomed to attend the prayer meeting or not, who will agree to do so between that time and the revival, unless they have some reason they believe God would accept, sign their names and drop the slip in the basket when the regular offering is taken. Two things unite to make signing easy: (1) The time covered by the pledge is comparatively short. Many will sign for a month who would not do so for a year. (2) The weeks before the revival are preparation weeks. The people then are asking, "What can I do?" as they too seldom do at other times. The passing of slips for their signature provides, at least in part, an answer to their inquiry which many unaccustomed to attend the prayer meeting will be glad to improve.

64. If a church bulletin is published, a paragraph each week concerning the privilege, the worth, and the progress of the meeting together with promised special features will be helpful.

65. Place a blackboard in a conspicuous place where all who attend the Sunday service can see it and place a telling paragraph relative to the prayer meeting upon it. In all such paragraphs, as elsewhere, avoid a complaining or discouraging note. Jeremiads do not attract. There is enough of victory in every prayer meeting to make a paragraph. Use it, and by it climb to greater victory. Occasionally, emphasize the paragraph by calling attention to it; but usually let it speak for itself.

66. The following paragraphs, which were copied from the record of the pastor who used them to help build up his prayer meeting, illustrate this kind of advertising:

Fifty-three were at prayer meeting last night. Can you not come next Thursday evening? Eight to nine.

Twenty-eight persons and a glorious rain. How's that for our last week's prayer meeting? Good!

Special music at our prayer meeting next Thursday

evening. Come early and bring a friend. Eight to nine.

A little over a year later in this same prayer meeting the following were used in three consecutive weeks:

If one hundred and fourteen come to prayer meeting next Thursday evening our average for the month of September will be one hundred, and this will be a record average for this church. Of course you want it to be.

Last Thursday evening was rainy and disagreeable, but sixty-five persons came to prayer meeting. Let everybody praise the Lord.

Somebody brought a bouquet of flowers to prayer meeting last Thursday evening. One hundred and thirty-six persons were there to share their beauty. It was a happy hour. Thursday, 7:30 p. m.

67. A blackboard outside the church with a written invitation upon it during the day preceding the prayer meeting hour will remind many who pass by of this service.

68. If the pastor makes use of the privilege of publishing his sermon subjects and other notes in the daily or weekly paper, the insertion of paragraphs such as the above will place the whole community in touch with his midweek service.

69. A circular letter from the leader sent by

mail cannot fail to be productive of good. By this plan persons who may not have received a personal invitation by word of mouth are not passed by—the last man and woman is reached. They know they are remembered; and, if they have begun to have that "outsider" feeling, it is quickly dispelled. The church is theirs. They are recognized. Furthermore, they are counted. More than that, they are wanted. The fact that printing and postage cost something may deter some from using this form of advertising; but that very element enhances its value in the eyes of the recipient. Invitations that cost, like everything else, mean more because of that very fact. No rules can be given for the writing of the circular letter, each occasion making demands of its own, both as to form and content; but it may safely be said that the leader who writes in love will observe every necessary propriety, and, while he quickens interest in his midweek service, will also minister comfort and blessing to his people.

70. A special letter to the officers of the church will lay their duty and privilege as regards the prayer meeting more definitely upon their hearts by accentuating the fact that they

as well as the pastor are set for leadership in the spiritual as well as in the temporal things of the church.

71. The fine art of personal invitation should be cultivated. In his work of visitation the pastor should lay the prayer meeting upon the hearts of his people. To talk to them in the crowd may be to miss some of them; to talk to them personally in their homes and stores, in their shops, out in their fields, and upon the street is to make each feel, "He means me." The leader, however, should not monopolize the work of personal invitation. That is a privilege large enough for all; and the company should be encouraged to share it. Remind them that the service is not only for those who come, but also for the multitudes outside who are kept away by indifference, and, perhaps, by lack of appreciation of the worth of the service; urge them to go to such, and, as they have opportunity, talk with them about the meeting. Occasionally, and preferably when some special feature is to be presented, definitely pledge them to invite at least one other person to come to the next meeting. Provide the workers with an easy starting point for their invitations by reporting at each

service the number present. When new records are made, say so. There is something compelling about growing things, and the prayer meeting is no exception. It is surprising how soon the people outside hear of the new records you make. Urge the company not to be content with merely reporting attendance, but to carry some of the service to their friends; for, if they will not come to the meeting, it is only proper that the meeting should be carried to them. Thus the nonattendant will hear of the service, its testimonies, something of its message, or its special feature, and will catch some of its spirit; while there will be opened up to the bearer of the invitation opportunity for conversation upon the deeper things of the soul, which are so full of interest to prayer meeting lovers. These invitations should not be confined to the saved alone; they should be carried to the unsaved as well. Indeed, the unsaved should not only be invited, but members of the prayer meeting company should, as the way opens, bring them to the meeting with the hope that they shall there decide for Jesus. Encourage your people to let you know of the intended coming of a possible seeker. You will be enabled to shape the meeting for his

helping all the more wisely. Invitations thus extended bring threefold blessing: (1) They extend the influence of the prayer service by carrying it to those outside. (2) They who carry the invitation are helped. And (3) the prayer meeting itself is built up. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth" is true when the "little fire" is in the prayer meeting personal worker's heart.

72. Urge your people, if at any time they cannot give themselves to this beautiful ministry in person, to avail themselves of the opportunity provided by the telephone and the personal letter.

73. Tracts, wisely distributed, will interest many in this service. (For list of tracts, see Appendix C.)

74. At the hour of service illuminated signs, of the sort often used by fraternities to call attention to their evening meetings, placed at the entrances of those churches whose location provides opportunity for their advantageous use, would call many a heart to share the fellowship of the prayer meeting hour.

75. If the leader and his company keep the meeting before the people in an attractive way, as they may, the people will come; it is then

their duty, yes, their privilege, to make the meeting such that they will want to come again. Outside advertising will bring a person once; but, after that, for that person, the meeting itself is the best advertisement.

CHAPTER V
THE OPENING EXERCISE

Paragraph

76. The opening affects the service.
77, 78. Usual method.
77. Usual method, why so.
78. An abuse of it.
79. Testimony.
80. Prayer.
81. The Holy Scriptures.
82. Questions.
83. Praise in unison.
84. Expression of appreciation.

CHAPTER V

The Opening Exercise

"In the beginning God."—Genesis 1. 1.

76. The character of the opening exercises, both as to matter and method, determines in some measure the character and power of the service; for the simple reason that first impressions of meetings, as of men, affect us favorably or unfavorably. If the opening is slow, cold, without change and life, it is needless to say that those who share it will be depressed, and since the feeling of depression is fatal to the spirit of devotion, it must be overcome before the meeting can come to a victory sweep; on the other hand, if the opening is characterized by promptness and warmth, variety and life, its effect is electrical, it places everyone on the alert, and the service at once promises triumph.

77. Practically all the services of the Christian Church begin with singing. The prayer meeting is no exception. It seems to be the easiest thing in the world to say, "Let us begin

the services this evening by singing number —." The form is stereotyped. Before the people start from home they know just how the meeting will begin. They do not complain about it. It is a good way; and because singing, by its power to enlist attention, please, and inspire, is admirably suited for the opening moments of a meeting, it is more than probable that it will continue to hold its pre-eminence in this particular. We believe it should do so.

78. To sing three or four hymns "while the people are gathering" and then to say, "Let us open the meeting by singing number —" is to blunder without excuse; for the simple reason that to do so is to compliment the tardy ones, a thing that should not be done for two reasons: Those who are late of necessity do not ask it, and those late through carelessness do not merit it. When you begin with singing let the first hymn you sing bear the honor of being the "opening hymn."

79. The psalmist who said, "Sing unto him," also said in the same breath, "Talk ye of all his wondrous works." Leave off singing once in a while, then, and begin with testimony. The reports of tasks attempted and accomplished,

of discouragements encountered and vanquished, of battles waged and won, of sins confessed and forgiven, with the notes of trust and hope, of love and of praise throbbing through all, will open the meeting with blessing for every heart.

80. When the moment for the service to begin arrives let the leader without preliminary remarks of any kind say, "Let us pray," and lead the company at once to the Throne of Grace. Or let him call upon some member to pray. He may have a season of silent prayer; or have several sentence prayers; again, he may have the company stand while he himself or some one else whom he may name offers an invocation for the blessing of God upon the service.

81. Use a responsive Scripture lesson. The Psalms lend themselves admirably to this service. If for any reason the Bibles are not in the racks do not use this exercise. The meeting must not start out with a sense of unpreparedness; the initial moments must not be vitiated by hunting and distributing even the Book of books. Or, better still, have the company memorize appropriate passages of Scripture, such as the "Shepherd" psalm, the

twenty-third, or the "I was glad" psalm, the one hundrel and twenty-second, and, as desired, repeat one of them for the opening exercise. Or if the leader desires he may read a verse or two of Scripture, pertinent to the occasion, and enforce the same with a few telling sentences.

82. Open with one or more questions, such as "Did you have a temptation to stay away to-night?" "How did you overcome it?" "Who helped you to come to prayer meeting to-night?" "Why are you here to-night?" "How can we help make this a good meeting?" "Will it spoil this meeting if a half dozen should arise at the same time to speak in the testimony service?" "If more than one arises to speak at the same time what should those who do not speak first do?" "Should Christians look over the room while some one is praying?" or any other. Let the answers be informal, and, if a member interjects a question, rejoice, for in the warmth of free and open discussion coldness and formality soon melt away, while, at the same time, there come higher conceptions of privilege and duty.

83. An informal opening of great interest

and value may be gathered from the drift of events in the community. Every community sooner or later has its periods of stress—long oppressive periods of heat or cold, times of drought or flood, crop failures, epidemics of disease, etc.,—these tell upon the prayer meeting by diverting the attention and lowering the attendance. But cold gives way to heat; heat to cold. The drought is broken. The flood subsides. Harvests ripen and epidemics abate. Here is the leader's opportunity. When he stands before those who have come with him to join in the service of prayer let him, if it should be after a long period of oppressive heat, say, "Everybody who is glad for this fine cool day, say 'Praise the Lord.'" Of course everybody responds; and he will see in the beaming faces of the company an illustration of the fact that it is good for people to say with their lips what they feel in their hearts. The leader will, of course, vary the reasons for praise according to the occasion: everybody who is glad for warmer days, for the rain, for the sunshine, for the harvest, for good health, for a quiet hour, etc., praise the Lord.

84. Give the opening moments of the meeting to the expression of appreciation for some

service rendered the company. For instance, if somebody brings a bouquet of flowers, call attention to the blossoms and remind the company that if any of them have come to the meeting possessed with the blues they may look at God's flowers and be glad. And they will. Meanwhile the saint who brought them will be receiving that particular blessing which belongs to those who give cups of cold water and render other like service in Jesus's name, and other bouquets will likely follow to bless your midweek service of prayer. When any object to adorn the room or make for its comfort is provided it affords an opportunity for this delightful opening.

CHAPTER VI
PRAYER IN THE PRAYER MEETING

PARAGRAPH

85. A service for prayer.
86, 87. The attitude in prayer.
88. Voluntary.
89. Danger of voluntary method, and how to meet: (1) by sections, (2) by request for silence, (3) by sexes, (4) by ages, (5) by school company, (6) by members of young people's society, (7) by Sunday school teachers, and (8) by new converts.
90-94. To get new voices to pray.
90. A privilege.
91. Encouragement.
92. Written prayers.
93. Pledge.
94. Home practice.
95. Length of prayers.
96. Exception to rule.
97. Methods to secure brevity: (1) by the clock, (2) by appeal to courtesy, (3) by persuasion, (4) by appeal to example, (5) by appeal to honesty, (6) by provision, and (7) by command.
98. A suggestion.
99. Prayer for special things.
100, 101. Concert prayer.
100. Memory.
101. Prayer psalm.
102. Silent prayer.
103. Requests for prayer.
104. Altar service.
105, 106. Sentence prayers.
107. Acknowledgment of answers to prayers.
108-110. The study of prayer.
108. The subject in general.
109. Bible prayers.
110. Prayers of others.

CHAPTER VI

Prayer in the Prayer Meeting

"Lord, teach us to pray."—Luke 11. 1.

85. The prayer meeting is called for the purpose of cultivating the fine art of praying. To open the meeting with prayer and then to run it exclusively in other channels is not to have a prayer meeting at all. To call it so is a misnomer. Let us repeat, the prayer meeting is called for prayer. Its name, *prayer* meeting, indicates as much. Other things may be lacking, but this should not be; other things may and should enter in, but only as handmaids to this, the chief thing. Moreover this service is called for mutual, for united prayer. Its name, prayer *meeting,* indicates this also. The people understand it so. When they come they expect to have a chance to pray. To deny them this privilege is to rob them of their right. The leader may pray long prayers in his pulpit on Sunday, but when he gathers with his people in the midweek service he should become in a very real way one of them.

He will, accordingly, in order to give them their right, be as brief in prayer as he expects them to be. In fact, having had his great Sunday opportunity, he will do well, frequently, to let his people do all the audible praying in this service.

86. In the light of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures relative to the attitude to be assumed during prayer it is useless to dogmatize. "Hezekiah sick unto death" upon his bed "turned his face toward the wall, and prayed" (Isa. 38. 1, 2); "Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord" and prayed (2 Sam. 7. 18); the publican, "standing afar off," offered his plea for mercy (Luke 18. 13); Paul on his way to Jerusalem "kneeled down on the shore, and prayed" with those who accompanied him out of the city of Tyre (Acts 21. 5); and Jesus in Gethsemane prostrated himself (Matt 26. 39). God heard all of these, not because of any virtue in the attitude of body taken, but because of the attitude of their hearts. Standing and kneeling are the attitudes most generally observed, the first having larger observance in Scripture times, the second coming into that distinction in this day, being not only the rule in all the services of some de-

nominations, but many congregations whose custom it is to stand during prayer in the Sunday services make kneeling the rule in their midweek service. But whatever the posture the company is in the habit of observing, it is well that the rule should not be so rigidly followed as to render impossible that contribution to variety the use of other attitudes will make.

87. The whole company should be encouraged to assume the same attitude during prayer; but whatever the rule, sitting, because of children they must hold, crowded seats, or physical infirmity, is necessary for some. These, when the attitude is such that they cannot join in it, should be made to feel that, when they sit with bowed heads and pray, they are in perfect accord with the meeting; indeed, it will minister comfort to them to have the whole company join them in their attitude at times. On the other hand, the leader should discourage the irreverent habit of sitting upright, with wide-open eyes, when men and women and youth are talking with God.

88. Prayer in the prayer meeting in the main should be voluntary. If the leader makes it the habit to call upon those who are to pray

there will be a tendency to call upon the same ones from week to week, for the reason that he will not always be sure whether certain ones, especially children and new attendants, will respond. The call for volunteers opens the way for everybody alike; and the responses from young and old, acquaintance and stranger, will, as they ever have done, by their unexpected but welcome contribution, quicken the meeting to new life.

89. We should not forget that when the meeting is mainly voluntary there is danger that the same persons occupy the time week by week so that the difficulty which this form of service is designed to avert is met with still. The following methods provide a way whereby the meeting may be kept from the grasp of the willing volunteer:

(1) Have your prayer meeting room arranged with aisles between sections of pews or chairs. Have a season of prayer by volunteers from one designated section, and then from another; or, if preferable, let volunteers from a certain number of pews, front, middle, or rear, lead the devotion. Regular attendants usually sit in the same places, and the leader by using or passing sections or pews can so determine who shall pray as that no two successive meetings shall fall into the hands of the same persons.

(2) At the beginning of the service ask all who led

in audible prayer the week before to give that privilege to others in the present meeting, while they take the place of those who at that time followed in silent prayer. Some may forget, but enough will remember so that your service will have the sense of newness you seek.

(3) To give further variety have a season of prayer led by men only. Another by women only. These two seasons of prayer will give opportunity for all the ready volunteers, of course; but by placing the obligation for response upon the smaller group, a thing always desirable because it is more personal, they remove the common opportunity which makes possible so much sameness.

(4) Of the same sort are seasons of prayer by ages. Have a season of prayer by children under fifteen years of age; another by young people from sixteen to twenty-one; and another by all others.

(5) Have prayer by the school section of your company, the teachers, the high school and grade pupils.

(6) Have one or more seasons of prayer by members of your young people's society only.

(7) Call for prayer by the Sunday school teachers only.

(8) Request that none but new converts, say those who have been converted within the past year, pray.

90. To get new voices to pray is one of the great privileges of the prayer meeting leader, one that brings rich reward not only to the one who prays, but to the company and leader as well.

91. Before a season of voluntary prayer let

the leader state that he desires persons who may never have led in public prayer to have the first opportunity, and that others should not respond until the meeting is opened for them. Let him encourage the timid ones not to try to pray at length, but to offer sentence prayers. Remind them that while some folks pray too long and hurt the meeting, new voices with short prayers always bless. Remind them that they are gathered as a family and that in their church home they may be free. Remind them, too, that if they ever enter into this privilege, it must be some time. Why not now? If they hesitate, the leader may indite sentences for them to use, such as "Bless me, Lord, and make me a blessing. For Jesus' sake. Amen." A prayer like the foregoing, repeated by the new voices in unison, will encourage some to individual endeavor later.

92. If some will not begin with extempore prayer urge them to write out a brief prayer at home, bring it to the service, and read it. Those who thus begin will gain confidence and will naturally outgrow the written method.

93. A pledge taken privately by the leader from those he wishes to enlist in public prayer will help in the moment of decision.

94. Urge those who have not yet begun to pray publicly, whether they desire to begin with the oral or written form, to pray audibly in their homes. They will thus become accustomed to their own voices in prayer and will thereby be emboldened to take up their privilege in this matter in the public service.

95. While the leader has the rare privilege of leading some into the exercise of public prayer, he also has the very plain duty of curtailing it in others. In almost every community there are those who pray too long. They persistently monopolize the time and usually kill the meeting, for the simple reason that there are very few who can pray ten and fifteen minutes in each service week in and week out, and do it to the edification of the people.

96. We are glad to say that occasionally a long prayer will not hinder but help the prayer meeting, especially so if the prayer be not an antiquated one, but the passionate heart-cry of some burdened soul. Under the power and blessing of such prayers the people forget time, and the wise leader does also.

97. On all other occasions the leader should help the dear brother and sister of multitu-

dinous words to brevity. The mere suggestion to "please be brief" will occasionally help one, but all too often it falls upon unhearing ears, or, to be more exact, upon unwilling hearts. To secure brevity the leader may use one or more of the following methods:

(1) By the clock. Have a clock so placed in the prayer meeting room that all can easily see it. We do well to pray by that sometimes. When two persons consume a period of fifteen minutes by the clock evidently one or both have prayed too long. A mere statement of that fact by the leader at the opening of the meeting where there is a possibility of prayers of that sort will help some to their duty in the matter.

(2) By appeal to the spirit of courtesy. Emphasize the fact that the meeting is a prayer *meeting*. Now, a "meeting" implies *others*, and *others* have *rights;* and, out in the world of society and business, rights are recognized by every gentleman and lady. Should we in the fellowship of the Kingdom be less courteous than they? No. As men and women, children of the heavenly King, we should give others a chance.

(3) By persuasion. Privately and frankly open up the case with the offender. He may not have been conscious of offense in the matter. Acquaint him with the fact. Lead him to see that a meeting shared by others is better than a meeting monopolized week by week by a mere few. No doubt but that he wants to be a blessing, and when the case is put up to him as a personal one he may not only see his privilege in this respect but also improve it.

(4) By appeal to example. Put the argument by

example thus: Jesus prayed long prayers, but never in public. The longest of which we know is in the seventeenth chapter of Saint John's Gospel and you can read it in three minutes. There were only eleven besides Jesus in that meeting. Urge upon the company the fact that if we want to be like our great Example we will follow a rule something like this: If twelve are at prayer meeting, one may pray three minutes; if more than twelve, believing that Jesus approves our giving others a chance, one's prayer must be shorter than three minutes.

(5) By appeal to honesty. Remind the company that the law of honesty applies to the prayer meeting as well as elsewhere, and that, consequently, they should no more think of taking the minutes that rightly belong to others than they would of appropriating their gold.

(6) By provision. After all is said, these dear souls who have the long prayer habit will feel, for a time at least, as if their liberties were curtailed. Habit, wherever you find it, in things sacred as well as profane, dislikes to be broken. Many of these saints cannot appreciate the fact that it is better to have fifty or one hundred in a prayer meeting where brevity is the rule than to have eight or a dozen where length is countenanced. They cannot see that when the devil lost his grip upon them in sordid lines he craftily smuggled it into their prayer life. They must, as they think, "pray through." Provide for this feeling by encouraging the organization of a cottage prayer meeting to meet upon some other evening of the week. Have it understood that this meeting, unlike the other, is open for anyone to pray or testify as long as he may choose. Attend this meeting yourself. It won't hurt the prayer meeting leader to join the smaller company and with them go "through." Usually they are very devoted people

who would hasten the coming of the Kingdom, and happy is the pastor whose efforts are helped by the petitions of men and women so devout. And as your regular prayer meeting grows they, too, will see in the greater numbers and interest the wisdom of brevity in the weekly service of prayer.

(7) By command. Finally, if all else fails, use the buzzer or sing the offender down.

98. To pray into one's hands, into the bottom of the pews, or with a voice so faint that only those who are near can understand is to fail to really lead. Encourage those so accustomed to louder voice and to freedom from the hand and pew habit by reminding them of their opportunity, and privilege as well, to bless not only a part but all the company. Practice on their part at home will help them more readily to attain liberty in the meeting in regard to these matters.

99. In special prayer meetings the prayers will, of course, cling around the theme—missionary, patriotic, or any other. It is a good plan, however, to have special objects of prayer in the regular prayer meeting. If a letter from a missionary be read, have a season of prayer for him and his work. Pray for the coming Sunday services, the coming revival, the mourning ones, the sick, some special com-

munity need, and do not forget those who have asked for prayers. Two or three seasons of special prayer for as many objects can be used with profit in many meetings.

100. Employ concert prayer. Repeat the Lord's Prayer, or any other prayer, known to all, together. A short prayer indited by the leader, such as, "Lord, give me the Holy Ghost, for Jesus' sake," or the Bible prayers, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief," and, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," can be used in the same manner. This form of prayer enlists the voices of the timid and is valuable for carrying the volume of prayer when volunteers hesitate.

101. With open Bibles, upon your knees, let all together read a prayer psalm.

102. Have periods of silent prayer, and do not make them so short that your people must cease praying before they have well begun. As a rule the leader should indicate the theme for this period of devotion.

103. Give opportunity for those who desire an interest in the prayers of God's people to indicate the same by the uplifted hand, by standing, or by voice. Also let it be known that written requests for prayers for self or

others, whether they be handed in before or after the service, are welcomed. Announce such requests the first service after receiving them, withholding the names of those making them, unless you know they are willing to have them given to the public.

104. Occasionally have the company come forward for a season of prayer. It is well for the people of God to leave their seats through the year as well as during the revival and gather around the altar to which they are wont to invite their unsaved friends. The best of us are but sinners "saved by grace," and as such should always keep up an intimate acquaintance with the place where ofttimes

> Heaven comes down our souls to greet,
> While glory crowns the mercy seat.

105. Have seasons when only sentence prayers are offered. These prayers may be wholly voluntary, or the leader may call upon some particular one for the opening, and upon another for the closing prayer. The latter method not only insures a prompt beginning, but also facilitates responses because of the fact that, until the one specified to close prays, the call for prayer presses with unbroken urgency.

106. The season of sentence prayers can be used with great profit in the closing moments when there still remain many who have not prayed. Just before the benediction have the company stand with bowed heads while as many as will volunteer lead in prayer. Let it be known that if two or three pray at once it will not spoil the meeting. God can hear. God will hear. Better by far at such a moment the united and eager voices of many talking with God than awkward absence of response. Magnify this closing privilege. Many will respond, and, in doing so, will bless both themselves and others.

107. Give opportunity for those who desire to do so to make public acknowledgment of answered prayer.

108. It is very fitting that in a meeting called for prayer some time should be taken for consideration of this great subject; indeed, so important and appropriate is this theme, it is always in order to consider it, whether it be in a large way by assigning topics relating to the subject beforehand for extended preparation, whose presentation shall be followed by general discussion, or whether the leader in some unexpected moment drops a question into the

service for informal discussion. Both methods should, in time, be used. The first requires more time and demands careful preparation on the part of some; while the second by its unexpectedness and the opportunity for universal reply it affords, will effectually dispel any disinterestedness that may be creeping into the meeting. Here is a quiver of questions adapted to such use:

(1) Why should we pray "in Jesus's name"?
(2) Why are answers to our prayers sometimes delayed?
(3) What is the difference between supplication and intercession?
(4) Why should we pray for one another?
(5) What are the requisites of true prayer?
(6) How great is the power of prayer?
(7) Why should we observe family worship?
(8) Is prayer simply asking God for what we want?
(9) Why should we come together to pray?
(10) What relation does the Holy Spirit bear to our prayers?
(11) Of what importance is prayer?
(12) What part should praise have in prayer? Confession?
(13) What relation does restitution bear to prayer? Forgiveness?
(14) Why do I believe in prayer?
(15) What place does faith occupy in true prayer?
(16) Can we make up for the lack of praying by doing?

(17) Is praying, in itself, without reference to God's answer, beneficial to the one who prays?
(18) How and when did I begin to pray in public?
(19) How great is the worth of secret prayer?
(20) How can we "pray without ceasing"?
(21) Of what value are written prayers?
(22) What place does prayer occupy in the soul-winner's equipment?
(23) How does God send the answers to our prayers?
(24) What should we especially pray for just now?

109. With the Bible in everyone's hands read and study the Bible prayers. One upon any particular evening will be enough. These models of devotion, these passionate heart cries, these petitions that moved heaven to answer will not only instruct in the form and manner of prayer, but will also inspire and encourage its practice.

110. The study of the prayers of God's great men and women whose lives are found outside the Bible record will likewise be of profit.

CHAPTER VII
THE PRAYER MEETING LESSON

PARAGRAPH

111. The Word of God should have a place.
112. Who should present lesson?
113. Reading the lesson.
114. Nature of comment.
115, 116. Enlisting others to help in the presentation.
117. The leader should always be prepared.
118. Blackboard presentation.
119. Omit comment.
120. Time, how long?
121. Time, when?
122. Series.
123. Announce reference before meeting.
124. Selecting the Scripture.
125. Topic notebook.
126. Where to secure lists of topics.
127. Bible reading.
128. Ten methods by which the company may introduce Scripture.

CHAPTER VII

The Prayer Meeting Lesson

"Search the Scriptures."—John 5. 39.

111. It is indeed fitting that those who come to talk to God should also hear from him; and this they do not only when their hearts listen to the inner voice, but also when they give a place in their prayer service, as should always be done, for the reading of God's Word.

112. The presentation of the Scripture lesson naturally falls upon the leader, who, by position, training, and opportunity for preparation, is especially fitted for this task, which, ordinarily, he should perform. If a visiting minister, a retired minister, or a former pastor is present, it is fitting to invite him to present the Scripture; or, if there be laymen with gifts for such service, it is well, occasionally, to invite such to perform it; but such invitation should always be extended, if possible, before the hour of service.

113. The reading of the lesson may be by any one of four methods:

(1) The lesson may be read by the leader.
(2) The leader may request another to read it.
(3) The lesson may be read in concert.
(4) It may be read responsively, in at least eight different ways: (1) by the leader and company, (2) by two persons selected by the leader, (3) by the men and the women, (4) by those under twenty-one and those over twenty-one years of age, (5) by the choir and the company, (6) by those sitting in two sections of chairs, (7) by rows of chairs, the front row taking the first verse, the second row the second verse, and continuing thus until the lesson is completed, and (8) the leader or some one appointed by him may read the Revised Version and another or the entire company may read the same verse from the Authorized Version.

The first method is exclusive and personal—the leader alone carries the responsibility; the second provides the leader with a splendid opportunity for training young people in the fine art of reading the Holy Scriptures in the congregation, a training which will pave the way for larger responsibility later on; the last two methods place the Book in everybody's hands and the Word in everybody's mouth, things always worth while.

114. The comment upon the lesson should not be shaped into a sermon. That form of address should be reserved for the Sunday service. The term, "prayer meeting talk," which has come to be applied to the prayer meeting

address, is well chosen, fitting the case exactly. This address should be a heart-to-heart talk from one member of the church family to his fellows; it should be soulful and sympathetic, a message which deals with the everyday life of the company, the experiences of their hearts and the work of their hands; it should be full of counsel, comfort, and, if need be, warning; it should throb with inspiration and hope. Far-fetched subjects, theological hairsplitting and abstruse dissertation should have no place here. When the leader is done the company should feel they know God's will better, and have greater eagerness, for the Master's sake and the world's, to do it.

115. At times, the leader may request another to present the subject; or, if he desires, he may invite several persons to assist him in this privilege. Previous to the service give slips with questions or topics relating to the subject, together with the number of minutes to be used by each, to those it is desired shall present them. Your helpers will thus have a clear before-meeting understanding as to what is expected of them. In the meeting, before you call for any topic, announce that each speaker is to have a particular number of minutes, the num-

ber given previously with the topics, and that a tap of your pencil will indicate their expiration, and that, if they desire it, they may have one more minute to close their remarks. With this clear understanding on the part of everyone, "calling time" upon any speaker will not be a cause of embarrassment, but rather an occasion for gratitude—on the part of the speaker, because he is saved from trespassing upon the time allotted to others, a thing that, when absorbed in speaking, one with the best of intentions may easily do, and, on the part of the company, that they are in the hands of a leader who safeguards the interests of all, hearers and speakers, alike. After all the topics have been presented, the leader should relate the whole, and apply.

116. At other times announce the subject with Scripture reference one week or at least the Sunday before, with the request that everyone prepare to contribute some word of comment, exposition, or an illustration. Welcome clippings relating to the theme which your people glean from their reading. The opportunity thus placed before all will be accepted by many, and, while no one can be permitted to speak at length, the variety, richness, and

beauty of the truth as it flashes from many minds will charm and delight.

117. This sharing of the delivery of the message with others will not relieve the leader of the obligation of adequate preparation; for upon him devolves the task of directing the presentation, relating the parts, and, in the end, summing up; and besides, he must also, in the case of the failure of those who are expected to take part, fill in; but he should in no case, when others are expected to speak, exhaust the subject in the opening moments. To do so is, to say the least, to be unfair, and no prayer meeting leader should consent to be guilty of that discourtesy.

118. Some themes admit of blackboard presentation. With a ready writer, the leader or some other, at the board, let the company preferably, or, if they fail, the leader, indicate the keyword or words in the verse or passage, or the leading thoughts in the same. You will find every eye following the hand of the writer. The advantage of this simple exercise is twofold: first, in the fact that though only a few words are written, or possibly a single sentence, yet the whole company will have their minds intent upon selecting the same;

and second, in the fact that when it is done the eye will help remember what the ear has heard.

119. Sometimes read the Scripture without any comment or "talk" at all.

120. Do not use more than fifteen minutes for Scripture presentation; it is the hour of prayer. Opportunity for extended Bible study should be provided elsewhere.

121. The mere shifting of the time of the presentation of the lesson, at one time in the beginning, at another in the middle, and at another toward the end or even at the very close of the service will give variety.

122. The use of "series" of studies, in which each separate study, though complete in itself, presents some phase of the common topic, will be found highly profitable, not only because of the larger grasp of the subject which is made possible, but also because such a plan is admirably adapted to sustain interest.

123. Placing the Scripture reference upon the blackboard a week before its presentation will serve a twofold purpose: It will be a constant reminder to all who see it of the midweek hour of prayer, and it also provides opportunity for preparation to all, which privilege some, at least, will gladly improve.

124. The leader who selects his own Scripture lessons has opportunity, because of his acquaintance with the people and conditions, to meet the situation in a very blessed way. However, some prefer to use subjects selected by others. The first method requires more initiative and originality; the second is likely to afford a larger measure of helps, expository and illustrative. The first is to gather the bouquet yourself; the second is to take it from some one else. Both have their advantages. Freshness will surely characterize the one, richness and elegance the other. Each leader must choose for himself and may find it wise to use upon some occasions one, and upon other occasions the other. Some pastors select and publish their topics for a quarter and sometimes even for a year in advance; but topics so planned should give way to those themes which, though brought forth by conditions and circumstances which were unforeseen, yet, nevertheless, are of such importance as to demand immediate consideration.

125. If you select your own topics, and you should do so for a part of the time, at least, you will find it profitable to have a topic notebook. In it put down, as you discover them, verses

and passages suitable for prayer meeting use, together with such notes explanatory and illustrative as may occur at the time. If you ask your people to hand you on slips of paper passages that are of especial interest to them you will greatly augment your own list and will have at hand a storehouse of material, rich, ready, and appropriate, and, consequently, such as will command attention, upon which you may draw as occasion may require.

126. Those who desire to secure published lists of prayer meeting topics, with Scriptural references, are referred to their denominational boards or to Appendix A of this volume, where books containing such lists are noted.

127. The leader may bring the Scripture lesson to the meeting in the form of a Bible reading. In such cases the members of the company should promptly take the references as the leader reads them, and be prepared to read the passages when called upon.

128. While it devolves upon the leader to bring the regular Scripture lesson to the meeting, it is his privilege, as well, to encourage his people to bring other passages of the Word. These may be used in connection with the regular lesson or apart from it, as he may deter-

mine, and, occasionally, they may take its place. These passages may be introduced by any of the following methods:

(1) General quotations. Open the meeting for volunteers to quote any passages of Scripture they may choose.

(2) Promises. Let those who will respond with promises. If you desire a larger response both as to number and variety than an impromptu call brings, give one week's notice, requesting those in one section to bring, say, promises for sinners, another section promises for the converted, another for material blessings, and another promises relating to heaven.

(3) Initial verses. Invite your company to bring to the meeting verses of Scripture beginning with the initials of their last names. If your company be large, before you call for responses, divide the alphabet into three or four sections; have all those who come within the first section, say A to G, stand, and, when the leader calls their initials, repeat their verses and sit down. Do the same with the remaining sections, interspersing the reciting of Scripture with singing. Have a teller keep tally, and when done, report the number taking part. A delightful exercise this, one that leads the company to search the Word for "my verse" and to make a personal contribution of it to the meeting.

(4) Favorite verses. Call for favorite verses, and encourage those who respond to give the reason for their preference.

(5) Prophecy and its fulfillment. After previous announcement so as to provide adequate time for preparation, open the meeting for volunteers to give some prophecy and also the Scripture showing its fulfillment.

The leader should be prepared with a list of prophecies and their fulfillment so as to be ready to supplement those given by the company should the response be meager. Indeed, he may guarantee a good response by passing slips with the references before the opening of the service, giving them to those who have not made any selection of their own. If he does this, he should enlist the larger number of persons by giving the prophecy to one person and its fulfillment to another.

(6) Keywords. Select some word you desire to study with your company and announce it as a "keyword" with the request that each one bring a verse containing it to the next meeting. Welcome a word of comment from each upon the passage he brings.

(7) Words of Jesus. Have attendants quote some command, promise, warning, prayer, invitation, or any other of the words of Jesus.

(8) Words of Saint Paul. Spend ten minutes with Saint Paul, having the company quote only his words.

(9) The Psalms. Do the same with the Psalms.

(10) Use the Proverbs in a similar manner.

In the presentation of the above exercises the one speaking should stand unless there be reasons to the contrary, and speak distinctly. Since most of these passages must necessarily be short, let them be given from memory as far as possible; but let those who are not willing to risk their memory be encouraged to read their contributions; it is better for them and for the meeting that they read than that they should take no part whatever.

CHAPTER VIII
PRAYER MEETING TESTIMONY

PARAGRAPH

129. Testimony has a place in the prayer meeting.
130, 131. Its nature.
132. Voluntary, chiefly.
133. Its length.
134. Posture.
135. To shift privilege.
136. To enlist new voices.
137. Written testimonies.
138. Returned absentees.
139. Leader should direct.
140. To expedite testimony.
141. Sentence testimony.
142. Shift period.
143. The just-before-dismissal testimony.

CHAPTER VIII

Prayer Meeting Testimony

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord."—2 Timothy 1. 8.

129. It was a conviction of the author's in his earlier experience that a prayer meeting should be made, as he was wont to express it, "really a prayer meeting," that is, a service for prayer supplemented by singing and Scripture reading, but without any testimony whatever. Not that he did not believe in relating personal experience, far from it; but because he did not believe that testimony fell within the province of the prayer meeting, but of other services in the church, notably the class meeting. Accordingly he ordered his prayer meetings so—made them "really prayer meetings," and though they were services that greatly helped all who came in touch with them, yet, it must be confessed, they lacked that blessed something which the spoken word of testimony gives. After a while, learning more concerning the nature of prayer itself, he saw that there is in it not only a place for petition, but

also for praise; for did not our Lord, who taught us to petition "Give us this day our daily bread," also teach us the way of praise, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory"? Grasping this truth, it was but a step to carry it to the prayer meeting; for if praise should be found in true prayer we should also expect to find it in a true prayer meeting. The one without it must be as incomplete as the other. The praise we put into our prayers is not adequate for this service; nor do songs of praise meet the need for praise any more than songs of prayer meet the need for prayer. We sing prayers and pray besides; we sing praises, and to complete our privilege, should speak them also—we should talk about what Jesus has done for us, for his glory. Seeing this, the author rebuilt his prayer meeting to the joy of his own heart and the great blessing of his people.

130. Prayer meeting testimony should not be merely comment; it should be real testimony. There is a difference; and the leader should instruct his people in this matter. Comment requires head; testimony also requires heart. Comment is impersonal; testimony is personal. Comment is likely to smother the fire;

testimony will kindle it. Comment may be dead; testimony is always life. Comment has its place, let us admit, as when topics are up for consideration, but it should not come into the testimony service and supplant the simple telling of the gracious experiences of the heart in things divine.

131. Prayer meeting testimony should also dwell very lightly upon the magnitude of past sins, unless such sins are still unconfessed and unforgiven; in which case confession should be as complete as God's law of forgiveness demands. To magnify sin is to magnify the devil. The followers of Jesus are not called upon to do that. When God forgives sins he says he "will remember them no more," and if he does not even remember them we should, at least, not unduly recount them. Prayer meeting testimony should witness for Jesus, his love, his grace, his power to save; it should exalt the Holy Ghost; it should tell of the new-found life, its progress, its comfort, its hope; it should speak of battles fought and victories won; it should speak of the joy of the Lord which is strength, and, if joy is dimmed, of faith which should never suffer eclipse—in short, it should glorify God.

132. As a rule make the testimony service a voluntary one. There will be times, however, when you will want certain persons to speak, and in such cases you should not hesitate to call upon them. You will find it refreshing, also, to occasionally employ, if the company be not so large as to take too much time for it, the old-time class meeting method of our fathers. Call upon one, and another, and then another till you have called upon all present; and, when each has spoken, take him by the hand and quote an appropriate verse of Scripture or give some word of counsel or exhortation suitable to his case. Intersperse this exercise with singing.

133. Let brevity be the rule in the testimony meeting. Exceptions should be rare. Brevity will give greater blessing and larger variety from the simple fact that many different phases of experience may be heard from as many different voices. If the meeting possesses those who are inclined to great length they may be helped to their privilege in this matter by applying the rule for obtaining short prayers found in paragraph 97 in the chapter on "Prayer in the Prayer Meeting."

134. Those speaking should stand unless

there should be special reason for sitting. The standing witness can more easily be heard, and, moreover, one so speaking is more clearly distinguished from his fellows and more definitely committed as a witness, things desirable always. When two or more arise at the same time to speak, encourage those who are to speak last to exercise "standing grace" by remaining upon their feet until their testimony is given. The mere fact that people are standing waiting their turn to speak a word for the Master is inspiring.

135. To avoid the same willing one half dozen monopolizing the meeting each week see paragraph 89 in the chapter on "Prayer in the Prayer Meeting," where rules for meeting the dangers of the voluntary service are found. As applied to testimony they would be, briefly: Call for testimony by sections or by pews; request the speakers of the week before to keep silent; have testimony by sexes; speak by ages; open the meeting for school folks only, the teachers, high school and grade pupils; give the time exclusively to members of your young people's society; do the same with your Sunday school teachers; and hear only from new converts. By these methods the privilege

of the service is passed around and freshness is secured.

136. A word from a new voice always adds to the power of the meeting. In the presence of those accustomed to speak persons who have not improved their privilege in this matter are usually timid. Such should be encouraged to take definite part. Persuade them that they can mention at least one thing for which they are thankful. Then make way for such by requesting that no one speak except those who have never spoken before. Encouragement given in love, both outside and inside the meeting, is sure to enlist new voices as the weeks come and go; and from the simple statement of thanksgiving they will be led to larger expression concerning the facts relative to their Christian experience.

137. Let it be known that written testimonies will be welcomed. The hesitant and timid may thus be actively enlisted in the service, and, having begun, will sooner or later outgrow the method. Encourage your people, also, to send their testimonies, when away, that they may be read in the meeting.

138. When regular prayer meeting attendants, because of absence from home, sickness,

or other reasons, have been denied the privilege of the service for several weeks, upon their return give them the first chance to speak and that without limit. The words they bring from their new contact with life, in sickness, business, or pleasure, will be like treasures brought from far.

139. The leader may direct the testimonies along any particular line he may choose, always remembering to accord to those who speak the privilege of taking up any other line they may prefer. He may suggest that the testimonies cluster around the Scripture lesson; about some item of interest in the community in its relation to the Christian life; or about some particular phase of personal experience. The suggestion may take the form of a question which those who speak may answer. Any subject, thus elucidated, will take on newer and richer meaning.

140. To expedite testimony, it is well and will give variety, occasionally, to ask all those who desire to speak to arise at once; then as the leader indicates, let each one speak, and having done, sit down.

141. If the company be large or the time limited, or both, and it is desired that all

speak, have each person name one thing for which he praises God; or, to put it another way, request each one to complete the sentence, "I am glad for ——"; or, let each be free to express his heart in whatever way he chooses provided he does it in a single sentence. This service, if joined in heartily by the company, teems with interest; but it should be kept going. If five or six or more are standing waiting their turn to speak, all the better. If it should drag, do something else.

142. Shift the period given to testimony. Sometimes let it come early in the meeting; sometimes in the middle; and at other times toward the close of the service. The mere fact of shifting will help keep the meeting from running in a rut.

143. In the moments just before the benediction, instead of having the company stand with bowed heads while a great many respond with sentence prayers, have them stand and give sentence testimonies. The fact that everybody is upon his feet on the eve of dismissal will help some to take part who have not courage as yet to arise in the crowd, stand alone, and speak. Voices thus won will be in line for larger effort in days to follow.

CHAPTER IX
PRAYER MEETING MUSIC

PARAGRAPH
144. The handmaid of prayer.
145. Posture.
146. Musical instruments and performers.
147. Hymn book.
148. Chorister.
149. Who should select hymns?
150. Chorus choir.
151. Congregational singing.
152. Special music.
153. Seasons of song.
154. Antiphonal.
155. In unison.
156. Without books.
157. Spontaneous song.
158. Old Hymn Service.
159. Favorite Hymn Service.
160. Knee hymns.
161. Read hymns.
162. Study hymns.
163. Bible reading on song.
164. Discarded hymn books.
165. Whistle.

CHAPTER IX

Prayer Meeting Music

"In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."—Colossians 3. 16.

144. Sacred music is the beautiful handmaid of prayer, and as such should always have a large place in the prayer meeting.

145. As a rule have the company remain seated while singing. The only regular exception should be during the singing of the last hymn when the company should stand. All other exceptions should be at the discretion of the leader. The prayer meeting is a midweek service, and many of your people have come from a day of toil. They come to the service weary in body. If they had stayed at home they would be spending the hour in their easy-chairs. Do not press them into the "rising and falling" habit. It distracts. Let them sit still and rest and commune. When the hour is done the rest you have ministered to their bodies will have helped to minister rest to their souls.

146. Use the organ or piano. The instrument will add sweetness, volume, and power to the singing. In the selection of your organist you will do well to pass by the brilliant, but irregular and sometimes tardy, one for the regular but less brilliant performer. Appreciate your organist. Let her know personally you are conscious of and are thankful for her interest and help in the service; and, if you will but give them opportunity, the people will gladly join you in saying "thank you" to this worker who contributes so much to the pleasure and success of the meeting.

147. Those who use the hymn book in their midweek service as a rule insist that there is no song book its equal for this purpose. The high type both of hymns and tunes makes it worthy of all the praise it receives; yet there is no doubt but that in most places the smaller and lighter volume of the gospel meeting type is used, and, very likely, will continue in its popularity. But whatever book is chosen the supply should be plentiful enough so that each attendant may have a copy.

148. The prayer meeting chorister need not only know how to carry a tune, he should also know God—he should be a man full of faith

and of the Holy Ghost, a man acquainted with the way of prayer. If he possesses only an ordinary voice that fact should not militate against him; in truth, the likelihood, yes, certainty, is, that he will more abundantly bless the meeting than some musical enthusiast who has not learned the way of prayer. If, besides being devoted to God, he is well versed in music and possesses a fine voice, both he and the prayer meeting company have a special reason for gratitude to God. In many places the privilege of leading in song devolves upon the leader, and happy is that leader who can and is willing to meet it even though it be in a very limited way; for he will find that the lack of a cultivated voice does not preclude the possibility of enlisting the interest of the people in sacred song nor keep him from leading them to glad response with their voices. But whoever he may be, the chorister should give attention to these four things: (1) He should stand where all the people can see him. (2) He should have the hymns ready upon the moment. (3) He should encourage everybody to sing. (4) He should not suffer the people to sing too slowly.

149. The leader should select the hymns to

be used before the service begins, and should, at times, share this privilege with his people. This may be done by inviting volunteers at large to announce numbers. If the response be tardy, the leader should call from his own list. To make response more prompt and certain he may request some particular person, or some designated group, say, those in a certain row of seats, or those in a certain section, or the choir to be ready with a hymn, when, after prayer, Scripture reading, or other exercise, it is desired to sing again. Sharing the selection of the hymns with the company will give larger variety in the selection, while persons choosing hymns will be personally bound closer to the meeting. Furthermore, some will call for hymns who will not volunteer to pray audibly or testify, and anything that enlists a new voice in the meeting, even in a small way, is worth while.

150. Have a chorus choir in your prayer meeting. If possible, let it be composed of children and young people who do not sing in the regular church choir. Do not form a close organization—rather let it be free like the gathering of young people around the fireside for an evening of song. Your service will be

helped by such a choir in three ways: the young people thus recognized will be bound closer to the service; their singing will bless every prayer meeting attendant; and the parents of the singers, gratified at the recognition given their children in the church, will take a larger interest in the meeting. If after a few months the choir members begin to show a hesitancy about entering the choir, discontinue it for a season. The members will thus get to enjoy the prayer meeting from the angle of the congregation. When the time is ripe call your young people into the choir again. You will find them ready to respond.

151. Congregational singing should be the rule. This is preeminently a people's service, and this is one way in which that fact can be emphasized. Even those who boast that they cannot carry a tune should be encouraged to make the effort, even though they come no nearer than merely to read. When the stranger who leaves your service says, "Everybody sings in that prayer meeting," he has paid your people a fine compliment indeed.

152. Solos, duets, and quartets will give variety and enrich your service. Employ children as well as adults in this manner. None

but professing Christians should render special music in this service, and they should not be of the type that, having rendered their special part, haste away to their easy-chairs at home or to some social gathering elsewhere. Folks who sing here should love God and also the prayer meeting. No matter how beautifully they sing, the other kind cannot contribute much to the spiritual welfare of the meeting, and besides, God's praying band does not have to be patronized.

153. We have seasons of prayer in which several prayers are offered consecutively, why not have seasons of song after the same manner? Without interruption sing not over two stanzas of four or five hymns. The fact that song follows song will be somewhat different from the almost universal method of singing but one hymn at a time.

154. Sing antiphonally. Many hymns and choruses are admirably adapted for this kind of singing, and the choir makes their use ideally possible. If there be no choir excellent results can be obtained by dividing the company into two sections for this purpose.

155. Occasionally, have the company sing in unison. The swelling of song in this man-

ner is full of power, and, moreover, possesses a peculiar charm.

156. The Christian Church of this age has the song-book habit. We open the book and follow the page while we sing words as familiar as "We're marching to Zion" and "A charge to keep I have." It is worth while, sometimes, to remind ourselves of this common fault and to break away from it for a few moments. When a familiar hymn is to be sung, ask the company to close their books, look away from them, open their mouths, and sing like God's birds. And they will. If you put your hymn books away for a whole evening and sing out of your hearts, you will have a keener appreciation of the conditions under which God's people worshiped in the days before hymn books came into vogue.

157. In the testimony service, and occasionally in other parts of the meeting, do not take time for the organist to hunt the music. The reason is threefold: As a rule but a single stanza or chorus should be sung at such a moment, and it is an unprofitable use of time to spend as much of it in finding the selection as is used in its singing; again, singing without the instrument provides opportunity for in-

troducing stanzas and choruses not found in the song book in hand; and, finally, the pause occasioned by place hunting breaks into the swing of the meeting. If the organist can catch the tune on the fly well and good; if not, go on without her. She will take no offense. If you encourage your people not to wait for the leader or chorister to start all the choruses, but to improve this privilege themselves, your service will be enriched thereby. When you come to the close of the service, announce the hymn, and with instrument and voices give praise to God.

158. Have an Old-Hymn Service. Use none but old hymns. Line them, as was the custom in the days of our fathers, and, for at least a part of them, do not use the instrument. Enlist the aged members of your company to assist in the selection of the numbers, preferably before the service. They have been along the way and will be glad to bring out of their other years the hymns that brought them and their fathers help and inspiration.

159. Have a service of favorite hymns. Request each one to hand in a slip bearing his own name and the number of his favorite hymn before or at the beginning of the serv-

ice, and, when you are ready to use each number, announce it and call upon the one whose favorite it is to give the reason for his preference—mother or father used to sing it, it was sung when I was converted, etc., etc. Or, if you prefer, do not use the slips, but let each one who desires to have his favorite hymn sung announce it in person. If your prayer meeting is so large you do not have time to sing all the numbers proposed, sing only a few and give the remaining hymns a place by having those whose favorites they are select and read a stanza. Or, if there be not time enough for this, let only the name of the hymn be given. However, always have those who respond give the reason for their choice, because when they do so they make a personal contribution to the meeting, a thing to be encouraged always. Ten minutes of prayer meetings other than those announced especially for this service can be profitably employed in this exercise in its briefer form.

160. Occasionally, in seasons of prayer, sing softly a "knee hymn," that is, a hymn of surrender, of consecration, or of petition. To do so is always appropriate and will be found especially helpful in carrying the service in

moments when volunteers hesitate. The bowed bodies, the grand hymn, the sweet soft music, the looking into God's face—all these conspire to touch and move the heart, they kindle the fires of devotion. Such hymns should not be announced by number, nor should the spirit of prayer be broken into by place hunting in hymn books. Use only familiar hymns, hymns out of the heart and out of the life, hymns that become for the singers really prayers because they have made them truly their own. To avoid the constant use of two or three the leader should have at his command several of the many suitable for such use. The following list, which makes no pretension to completeness, is yet full enough to guarantee the leader who makes use of it against repetitious choice:

Take my life and let it be.

Just as I am, without one plea.

Saviour, more than life to me.
Chorus: *Every day, every hour.*

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole.
Chorus: *Whiter than snow, whiter than snow.*

My Jesus, I love thee.

I am coming to the cross.
Chorus: *I am trusting, Lord, in thee.*

Lord, I hear of showers of blessing.
Chorus: *Even me, even me.*

My faith looks up to thee.

I hear thy welcome voice.
Chorus: *I am coming, Lord.*

Alas! And did my Saviour bleed?
Chorus: *Help me, dear Saviour, thee to own.*

I am coming to Jesus for rest.
Chorus: *I believe Jesus saves.*

Nearer, my God, to thee.

Jesus, my Lord, to thee I cry.
Chorus: *Take me as I am.*

There is a name I love to hear.
Chorus: *Oh, how I love Jesus!*

Holy Spirit, faithful guide.

All to Jesus I surrender.
Chorus: *I surrender all.*

I can hear my Saviour calling.
Chorus: *Where he leads me I will follow.*

161. It is well, at times, to read a hymn. Any one of several methods may be used: An individual may read it, or several persons may do so, each taking a verse. Those who may not have used their voices alone in the meeting may be enlisted to take part in this way, and becoming accustomed to hearing their voices in the congregation, be emboldened to take up their privilege as to prayer and testi-

mony; selected groups, by age, by sex, or by sections of seats, may read it; the choir may do it; or the company and leader may read responsively or in unison. Do not always sing the hymn after reading it.

162. Study the great hymns. A word of comment by the leader upon a hymn, its meaning, some incident relative to it, or the life and work of its author, will be helpful. If it is desired to enlarge this phase of the service, assign topics covering the points indicated above to members for special preparation relative to some selected hymn and allow longer time for their presentation. A larger appreciation of the hymns of the church by everyone present will surely follow.

163. A Scripture reading upon "Song" will enrich either the old-hymn or the favorite-hymn service.

164. When you buy a hymn book different from the one you have been using, do not dispose of the old books. Keep them where you can get them whenever wanted. Occasionally use them for an evening instead of the books you use regularly. For the people to have them in their hands will be like touching old friends. Moreover, it is likely that they con-

tain hymns not to be found in the new book, hymns the singing of which will not only give variety to the service of song, but will also call forth happy memories of other days which will lift and cheer.

165. Once in a while do this good thing: While your women sing a chorus have your men whistle it. Why not? Dear Brother Formality may be greatly shocked. Never mind. Just keep sweet and go on. God has not said it is wicked to whistle in church. The truth is, the women of our households sing and the men whistle the same tune; the women bring their song to church, and the men, when they come, must leave their whistle outside. Let us reform. Have the men bring their whistle in. It is just as religious to whistle as it is to sing, provided you whistle the right tune, and prayer meeting tunes are, or should be, right. Women's singing and men's whistling combined make fine music. The lads in the meeting will like it, of course, and other folks too, and even Dear Brother Formality will have to admit, after a few happy occasions, that "it sounds pretty good."

CHAPTER X
SPECIAL PRAYER MEETINGS

PARAGRAPH

166. Why valuable?
167-171. Resurrection Prayer Meeting.
172-179. Patriotic Prayer Meeting.
180-184. Labor Day Prayer Meeting.
185-190. Thanksgiving Prayer Meeting.
191-196. Christmas Prayer Meeting.
197-202. Old Year-New Year Prayer Meeting.
203, 204. Tithing Prayer Meeting.
205-210. Educational Prayer Meeting.
211-214. Temperance Prayer Meeting.
215-219. Missionary Prayer Meeting.
220. Other benevolent causes.
221-223. Organization Prayer Meeting.
224, 225. Our comrades of other days.
226. When the former pastor returns.
227-230. The Agape, or Love Feast.

CHAPTER X

Special Prayer Meetings

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything."—Matthew 18. 19.

166. Special prayer meetings are valuable for three reasons: (1) they are something different, something out of the ordinary, and, consequently, aid in securing variety; (2) they require special preparation; and (3) they command larger interest and thus draw some to the prayer meeting who would not be attracted by the ordinary service. Herewith are submitted suggestions for such services under fifteen different heads; and, in view of the abundant material available, these suggestions can find expression in literally dozens of special meetings.

RESURRECTION PRAYER MEETING

167. Have this prayer meeting Easter morning at sunrise.

168. Beautify the room with flowers.

169. Let song and testimony and prayer throb with praise. Have special music.

170. Let the Scripture lesson deal with the resurrection story. Carry spices with the women in the early morn; run with Peter and John to the sepulcher; go in with Peter and then with John and see where the Lord lay, and note the folded napkin; stand with weeping Mary while she learns that he whom she considers the gardener is Jesus; and walk with the disciples along the road to Emmaus. Let Paul preach about this wondrous event (1 Cor. 15). Relate the resurrection of Jesus to himself, to his immediate disciples, and to his kingdom in all the ages. Sermon after sermon is here, too much for one meeting, in truth, but enough of it should be appropriated to give all a deeper sense of the reality of the resurrection and a fuller realization of its benefits.

171. Before you go forth, gather about the altar and consecrate yourselves anew to Him who is "alive for evermore."

PATRIOTIC PRAYER MEETING

172. Love of country and country's flag is a noble virtue. To perpetuate the good name, the blessing and honor of both is an ambition worthy of holy men. In the realization of

such an ambition both wrong and right must be recognized; the one must be forsaken and confessed, the other rallied about and maintained; and, all the while, God must be put first, because to do so is to recognize and act upon the scriptural affirmation, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."

173. What better place to do this than the prayer meeting, and what better time to do it in a special way than the regular prayer service just preceding the anniversary of the nation's natal day?

174. Place the flag in your place of prayer.

175. Have special music.

176. Do not forget the nation's past.

177. Face squarely the nation's present perils, and note her points of excellence and strength.

178. Build an ideal for the nation's future, note the part you as a company should have in helping to realize it, and accept it.

179. Then pray.

LABOR DAY PRAYER MEETING

180. The regular prayer meeting immediately preceding Labor Day, the first Monday in September of each year, may very appro-

priately be observed as Labor Day Prayer Meeting. The toiling masses are estranged from the church, they tell us, but we are loath to consider the declaration so true as some would have us believe. At any rate it will be well to pray about it, that the conscience of the church may be quickened concerning her duty and that the heart of the toiler may become more responsive to his privilege.

181. Assign appropriate topics to competent persons for short discussion; consider vocational problems, those of the lawyer, railroad man, doctor, printer, etc.; and make the matter personal by such themes as, "Has Our Church a Welcome for the Laboring Man?" and, "What Can We as Toilers Do to Win Our Fellows to Jesus?"

182. If a representative of labor competent to speak, and who is also a believer in the practice and power of prayer, is available, invite him to present the evening's theme.

183. When you pray remember not only the toiler but also his employer, who, while he may not carry a load in his hands, may carry a greater one in his heart, and may for that reason have the greater need of help from on high.

184. The leader should so shape the meeting that the company ever after should recognize in all toilers, whether rich or poor, not persons to be patronized, but brothers indeed who are worthy of and should receive the glad hand of welcome to their rightful place in the church of the toiling Christ.

THANKSGIVING PRAYER MEETING

185. The prayer meeting upon or just preceding the annual national Thanksgiving occasion provides the most suitable time for this service.

186. Decorations of fruits and flowers from field, garden, and home will be beautiful reminders of the goodness of God during the year and give occasion for larger gratitude.

187. Let the Scripture lesson, the topics to be discussed, and the hymns all be in accord with the spirit of the occasion.

188. Invite the company to bring clippings upon "Thanksgiving" to be read by them in the service.

189. In the testimony service let each one tell at least one definite thing for which he or she is grateful.

190. The prayers should be glad with praise,

and, before you go, as a supreme expression of your gratitude, give yourselves anew to the great Giver of all good.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER MEETING

191. Hold this service just before Christmas.

192. Decorate with evergreen, holly, and mistletoe.

193. The Scripture lesson, whether from prophecy, Gospel, or Epistle, should exalt the manger Babe.

194. The following or similar subjects will lead to a larger appreciation of Jesus: "The Babe in Prophecy," "God's Supreme Gift," "The Angels and the Shepherds," "The Wise Men," "Bethlehem," "The Babyhood of Jesus," and "Jesus and the Little Children." These will lead to a larger appreciation of to-day's privilege and duty: "The Children of the Heathen," "Home Influences and the Child," "Children in the Factories," "Children in the Slums," "The Orphan Child," "Our Duty to the Child," and "Gifts We Should Give."

195. Let there be words of praise, Christmas songs and carols, and special music, preferably by young people.

196. Worship Him who "was made flesh,"

and, like the wise men of old, bring your choicest, your richest gifts, and lay them at his feet.

OLD YEAR—NEW YEAR PRAYER MEETING

197. Let this prayer meeting be either the last regular one before the close of the old, or the first one at the beginning of the new year. Or, if desired, the suggestions following may answer for two separate meetings, by using those relating to the old year in the last, and those relating to the new year in the first prayer meeting of the year.

198. Give a part of the service to retrospection. Recount the trials of the year gone by. Acknowledge mistakes. Confess wrongs. Set forth new truths learned. Note progress in holy living. Praise God for triumphs won.

199. Let the coming year pass in prospect. Contemplate the work to be done, its nearness, its proportions, its urgency. Measure the strength of the enemy. Face duty and privilege.

200. The leader may facilitate these discussions by proposing such topics as these: "The Past Year's Failures," "The Past Year's Successes," "What Help May We Gain from Our

Failures?" "What Help May We Gain from Our Successes?" "Lost Opportunities," "How May We Improve the Time?" "Some Soul Enemies We May Meet," and "What is Our Supreme Duty the Coming Year?"

201. In closing let the old year and the new year be wedded in a consecration service that leaves the past with its failures and successes, its defeats and its victories, in the hands of Jesus, while it gives every heart without reserve to him, that, cleansed by his blood and filled with his Spirit, they may be used by him for his glory.

202. Then, arising, sing Charles Wesley's great hymn, "Come, let us anew our journey pursue," and go forth to the privilege of life again.

TITHING PRAYER MEETING

203. As a rule those who attend the prayer meeting are persons who, when they are made acquainted with the will of God, are ready to do it. Consequently this service provides large opportunity for advancing the cause of scriptural giving.

204. Four things should enter into this meeting:

(1) The Scripture bearing upon the subject of Christian stewardship should be presented. The material is so abundant that its adequate presentation will require many evenings.

(2) Opportunity should be given to those who have practiced tithing to relate their experience. The Scriptures relating to this subject will thus be illustrated and enforced by living witnesses.

(3) Opportunity should also be given to those who wish to enroll themselves with "The Tithers." To this end let cards similar to the following be distributed:

I hereby enroll myself
among
THE TITHERS
.....

Of, if you prefer, use Jacob's pledge:

Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.—Gen. 28. 22.

.....

After time has been given for signing, collect the cards and enroll the names in a book kept for that purpose. If those who sign desire cards to keep, provide them with duplicates. If cards are not available the leader may write the pledge upon the blackboard and distribute blank slips for the signatures with the under-

standing that each one who signs desires his name enrolled. Do not seek to obligate the signers as to any detail of time, place, or method of payment; be content to have won them to the acceptance of a great principle. Let details follow.

(4) To equip those who enroll themselves with ready material for further study and for use among others, to provide those who do not see their way clear to sign at once with means for further investigation, and to arm the veterans of this good way for new conquests, let literature relating to this subject be distributed at the close of the service.

EDUCATIONAL PRAYER MEETING

205. In this day when the churches are more and more appreciating the benefits of education and are realizing as never before the importance of providing for its dissemination under distinctively Christian influences, and are, moreover, giving larger gifts of time, thought, and money for the attainment of that end, it is quite fitting that the prayer meeting be enlisted in this cause.

206. The colors and pennants of your own church school may very appropriately adorn the walls of your prayer meeting room for this evening.

207. For special music, if you have college young people who can do it, have them sing a college hymn.

208. Let persons who have been given the topics beforehand discuss three or four of the following, or others germane to the subject, four or five minutes each: "Why Should We Pray for Our Church Schools?" "Our Own Church School," "The Problem of the Teacher," "The Problem of the Pupil," "The Educational Opportunity of Our Young People," "Our Public Schools," "The Schools and Religion," "The Bible in the School," "Why I Went to College?" "Why I am Going to College?" and "Educating One's Self Outside of College."

209. When you pray remember in a particular way the academy, college, or university the company is or should be vitally interested in, and, of course, you will not forget to pray for the public schools, bulwark of Protestantism, their officers, teachers, and pupils, remembering, also, the citizenship which supports them.

210. Have this prayer meeting before the young folks go away to college. At the close invite them forward and have everybody extend the hand of well-wishing and farewell. This will give a happy memory to cheer the college boy and girl in moments of homesickness, and will inspire others of the young peo-

ple with a desire to make use of the same opportunity.

TEMPERANCE PRAYER MEETING

211. The battle against strong drink has not yet reached the stage where it does not need the might of prayer. But mighty praying is always based upon knowledge. Men who know conditions and needs, men who know resources —these may effectually pray. Information and prayer—let these occupy a large place here.

212. The information may be provided by the leader or by one or several appointed by him. But whoever brings the message—it is not worth while to suggest topics here, they stand out everywhere—should pour facts into the meeting, not facts vague and indefinite, but particular and incisive and fresh, facts concerning friend and foe, facts from far and near, facts to think over, facts to weep over, facts to shout over, facts to pray over.

213. When you have the facts then to your knees. Pray like men on the eve of battle. Pray till the fire burns and you know heaven has heard. Then, baptized from above, go forth into the to-morrows to strike such blows,

with voice and pen and vote, in public and private, as shall hasten the ultimate triumph of this mighty reform.

214. The prayer meeting preceding a contest relative to this subject in which the prayer meeting attendants are to participate provides a specially opportune time for this service.

MISSIONARY PRAYER MEETING

215. Since the true church is a missionary church, the true prayer meeting must be missionary also. The material to be presented is so abundant and varied as to make a monthly missionary service both interesting and profitable. Missions in the abstract should have little place here; but missions in the concrete should bulk large. Accordingly, the distinguishing feature of this service should be the presentation of the field. This lays the basis for intelligent praying and gives inspiration for larger doing.

216. The mission field is so large and new material is continually being provided in such abundance that the author, instead of presenting ready-made programs, which, of necessity, could deal with only a portion of the vast problem, submits three methods by which all fields

may be presented and the very latest information utilized. The continuous use of any particular one of these methods should be avoided:

(1) The individual method. If some missionary from the field or other person specially qualified to speak is available, it will be well to have him present the subject. In the absence of such help let the leader, who has mastered the subject completely, out of a full heart press the truth home.

(2) The company method. In this method let the leader prepare as for the individual method, but let him announce the subject the week before with the request that the entire company also prepare upon it and be ready to contribute at least some part, though it be only a single fact, to the discussion. With the blackboard, map, or chart in plain view of all, let the leader by questions direct the course of the comment and discussion by eliciting answers as to the land, its location, topography, climate, and production; the people, their race, political history, social customs, education, morals, religion; and the missionary enterprises of the field, with especial reference to the particular one it is desired to lay upon the hearts of the company.

(3) The assignment method. By this plan the leader assigns topics relating to the theme to selected persons who come to the meeting prepared to report upon them. This method lays the responsibility of a larger contribution upon the few, while the company method lays the privilege of a small contribution to the meeting upon many, even upon all. Both have their place.

217. Brief quotations from current litera-

ture, personal letters from missionaries in the field, pictures illustrating the land under consideration, its people, the mission property and the missionary, the flag of the country, and curios illustrating the life and customs of the people, should always be welcomed.

218. Let the prayers cling around the particular field under consideration.

219. Do not hesitate to distribute missionary literature at the close of the service.

OTHER BENEVOLENT CAUSES

220. It is fitting to discuss not only the missionary cause in the prayer meeting, but all other benevolent enterprises of the church as well. The principles outlined above under the head of the Missionary Prayer Meeting can be so readily adapted to the presentation of any other cause as to require no further treatment here.

ORGANIZATION PRAYER MEETING

221. The different organizations of the church, such as the Sunday school, the young people's society, the Brotherhood, the Ladies' Aid Society, etc., will appreciate an opportunity to occasionally have charge of the midweek service of the church.

222. Upon such occasions the society in charge should be responsible for the major part of the program, which, besides providing opportunity for prayer, should seek to acquaint the hearers with the history, methods, and work of the society, the leader merely opening the service briefly, and, in the end, closing it in a manner appropriate to the occasion.

223. The advantages of the organization prayer meeting are three: (1) members of the company not members of the organization will appreciate more fully the object of the organization and the efforts of its members, and, accordingly, will be led to give larger sympathy, and, as opportunity may afford, more hearty cooperation, (2) the membership of the organization will be drawn into closer touch with the prayer meeting, and (3) the special interest engendered will mean special invitations which will most surely enlist others in the midweek service.

OUR COMRADES OF OTHER DAYS

224. Toil in the service of Jesus binds the toilers in one of earth's sweetest relationships; and, as years come and go, so the toilers. There

is no prayer meeting but has its absent ones, some who will never come back. To mention the names of this "cloud of witnesses" is to crowd the memories of their former fellow workers with strange and blessed emotion; while to recount their words and deeds is to incite all to larger endeavor in holy living.

225. Have a volunteer service. Let those who will, arise one by one, and, naming a former comrade, relate some incident in his life, a struggle, a passion, a hope, a victory, or bring anew some word of his, not using more than two or three minutes. Under such recital hearts will soften as with sweet benedictions. Then go to prayer. Pray for the absent ones who are still fighting the good fight of faith in the church militant and dedicate yourselves to the unfinished work of those who have entered into the fellowship of the church triumphant.

WHEN THE FORMER PASTOR RETURNS

226. When a former pastor is present in the prayer meeting have him read the Scripture lesson and make the evening's address, using whatever time he may choose. At the close of his remarks have all who were in the church or community at the time of his pastorate indi-

cate the same by the uplifted hand, or, preferably, by standing. This definitely marks off the part of the company who should have right of way in the meeting. State clearly that no others should speak and open the meeting for the ex-pastor's acquaintances. The testimonies naturally will be reminiscent. They will bless the former pastor as he hears of seed sown, perhaps in discouragement, coming to rich fruitage; those who speak will have their own hearts settled in the faith; while the listening company will share in the blessing of it all. When these are done, should there be time, let others speak. At the close have a general handshake so that old acquaintances may meet again and that the new members may make the acquaintance of another man of God into whose labors they have entered.

THE AGAPE, OR LOVE FEAST

227. The agape of the early Christian Church, once quite generally observed by our fathers under the name of "Love Feast," has in most places been dispensed with, so that multitudes who love God do not even know what such a service is like. The prayer meeting provides an excellent opportunity for the

reestablishment of this beautiful service, which, though not a sacrament, is worthy to be perpetuated.

228. Let it be observed just before or after the communion.

229. Provide bread as for the sacrament, and water; and, after the opening exercises of song, prayer, and Scripture reading, let the class leaders or other officers of the church, the company remaining seated, distribute them to all who are minded to receive them, having it understood that they who partake give token by that act of the love they bear to all others. During the distribution let some devotional hymns be sung softly. After the distribution open the meeting for an extended testimony service and make it a real "experience meeting" where those who speak (using, if they desire, more time than is commonly accorded) may relate the story of their surrender, their conversion, their consecration, their sanctification; their trials, heart wanderings, their backslidings and restorations; their soul struggles and soul triumphs. Intersperse the service with song. Here is a time and place, fitting indeed to employ the old-time class meeting method mentioned in paragraph 132.

Call upon each by name to speak, and after each one is done, take him by the hand and quote an appropriate verse of Scripture, or give some word of counsel or exhortation suitable to his case.

230. Those who make use of it will find this old-time service still charged with old-time power.

CHAPTER XI
SOME OTHER THINGS WORTH WHILE

PARAGRAPH

231. Their place.
232. The census.
233. Topic cards.
234. Ushers.
235. Collection.
236. Post office.
237. Discuss church affairs.
238, 239. Question drawer.
240. "Quiz" period.
241. Book review.
242. Biography.
243. Devotional literature.
244. The absent leader.
245-247. Letter Committee.
248. Prayer Meeting Committee.
249. Volunteers.
250. Union prayer meeting.
251. Prison and other prayer meetings.
252. Recitation.
253. Creed and Catechism.
254. Prayer list.
255, 256. Memory work.
257-260. Prayer Meeting Scrapbook.
261. The church paper.
262. Printing.

CHAPTER XI

Some Other Things Worth While

"All things to all men."—1 Corinthians 9. 22.

231. What the seven primary colors are to painting, the seven tones of the octave are to music, and the digits are to mathematics, prayer, Scripture, song, and testimony are to the prayer meeting. They are fundamental. As in painting, music, and mathematics, so here, the shifting of the fundamentals, the omission of one or more of them, and the changing of emphasis upon them give endless variety. But as in painting, music, and mathematics other things complement and complete the fundamentals, so in the prayer meeting there are other things which may, directly or indirectly, further enrich the service; and the leader who desires to excel does not hesitate to employ them when opportunity presents and wisdom directs.

THE CENSUS

232. It is very important to keep a record of prayer meeting attendance. (See para-

graphs 10–14, 66, and 71.) In prayer meetings whose attendance is not over fifty the leader may easily ascertain by glancing over the company during a song how many are present, but when more than that number come he will very likely find this method distracting. In the latter case appoint as many tellers as you have sections of seats, and just before the benediction let each report his section. Then add. Or, if preferred, appoint a secretary who shall count the company quietly when and in such manner as he may choose. In every case announce the attendance at the close of the service, and keep a permanent record of the same.

TOPIC CARDS

233. If you prepare topics for a quarter, six months, or a year, or use those prepared by others, it is well to have them neatly printed. Distribute the cards not only at the beginning of the period, but also at frequent intervals afterward, for the twofold reason that new attendants are continually coming into the service and that some persist in losing their cards.

USHERS

234. Provide your prayer meeting with ushers. Even though there be plenty of seats available yet the kindly service of an usher is a beautiful courtesy, one especially appreciated by the stranger who may enter your gates. Appoint young men to this office; the training they receive will prepare them for like service later in the great congregation.

COLLECTION

235. Perhaps your prayer meeting company, as such, has never had an opportunity to exercise itself along the practical lines of Christian stewardship; that is, your people have never given anything so that they can say, "Our prayer meeting gave" the money to furnish a room in the hospital, to provide a struggling Sunday school with literature, to buy a wheel chair for some invalid, to buy an organ for a rescue home or mission, or to help any other worthy object, home or foreign, large or small. Provide the opportunity for them to come into the enjoyment of this pleasure by taking a collection, and, when you remit the contribution, do so in the name of the prayer meeting. The response to this opportunity

will not only bless the recipient, but will more surely bless the givers, and will give, withal, not only variety to the prayer meeting, but also an added sense of its worth.

POST OFFICE

236. Use the post office. Post cards are cheap. Questions to be answered, topics to be discussed, and requests for any other contribution to the service can quickly and easily be placed in the hands of your helpers by this method. Furthermore, the recipients of such messages, however small, will always be pleased at the interest which manifests itself in such recognition.

DISCUSS CHURCH AFFAIRS

237. At times turn the prayer meeting into a forum for the discussion of some matter that relates to the life and work of the church, avoiding subjects which might engender controversy, and putting none forth but those the consideration of which can result only in mutual profit.

QUESTION DRAWER

238. Have a question drawer. All questions should be submitted in writing, and the

leader should reserve the right to discard any the answering of which in his judgment might not be helpful to the meeting. This method provides the fullest opportunity for those who have perplexities to state them without disclosing their identity, and that in a place where they know their inquiries will receive fair consideration and a sympathetic answer, while at the same time it makes it easy to eliminate all controversial themes.

239. The question drawer should be announced beforehand, and all questions should be placed in the hands of the leader or in a "question box" before the service in which it is expected they are to be answered. The leader will thus have adequate opportunity to prepare for answering in a worthy way the questions proposed.

"QUIZ PERIOD"

240. Questions may also be introduced into the meeting by the "Quiz Period" method as outlined by Christian F. Reisner in Church Publicity (see Appendix B). Prepare a list of questions relating to the Christian life; place a printed slip containing a complete list in the hands of each one present, and let volun-

teers indicate by number the ones they desire answered. The leader thus has an opportunity to bring before his people a suggestive list of inquiries whose reading alone must be beneficial, while persons who may not have brought questions, or who cannot recall any at the moment, or who, because of timidity, fail to ask questions upon their own initiative, are thus helped to bring into the meeting inquiries which especially interest them.

BOOK REVIEW

241. If some book has gripped your heart for good, share the blessing with your prayer meeting family by presenting a review of the same at the midweek gathering. Then loan your volume, and also go into the book business for a while, imitating the fathers who carried books in their saddlebags, at least to the extent of letting it be known that you would be pleased to order copies for those who might desire them.

BIOGRAPHY

242. Take time occasionally to read appropriate extracts from the biographies of the great and good of all the ages. These provide

abundant material for the illustration of Scripture truth, and by revealing the struggles, disappointments, conflicts, and victories of others help those who hear to better living.

DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE

243. The devotional literature of the church is rich with soul-food which the leader will do well to bring to his people, at times, by reading or having read selected portions. Helpful tracts, placed in the hands of your people for distribution, will minister blessing both to those who carry and to those who receive them.

THE ABSENT LEADER

244. When the leader is absent, a letter or postal from him to be read in the gathered company will bring to his people all the joy that comes from expressed remembrance.

LETTER COMMITTEE

245. Appoint a letter committee whose duty it shall be to keep in touch with the absent ones of the prayer meeting family; otherwise it is likely that only occasionally will your service receive a message from them; not that they are adverse to writing, but because they

may not have thought about it and have not been encouraged to do it. Communications from absent ones in the hands of others than the committee should also be welcomed.

246. This committee should also solicit communications from those who were once members of the prayer meeting family, but are now away permanently, to be read upon an appointed evening. Many will respond to such an invitation to the joy of the whole company.

247. Do not save all your missionary letters for the missionary prayer meeting. The reading of one occasionally in a regular service will minister good to both cause and people.

PRAYER MEETING COMMITTEE

248. In some places the leader will find it advantageous to use a prayer meeting committee, the size and personnel of which he should determine. The counsel and advice of these selected workers will add to his own efficiency, while in the work of preparing programs for special prayer meetings their help will be found invaluable.

VOLUNTEERS

249. If you have some prison work to be done, some sick ones or new families to be

visited, some needy to be ministered unto, or any other Christlike service the members of your company might perform, and in its performance not only give but also get a blessing, do not always enlist your helpers privately. Call for volunteers. You will likely discover some who are willing to help whom private solicitation might pass by. Not all workers are willing or even capacitated to do all kinds of work; accordingly, it is well to let each indicate, by written slip or otherwise, the kind of service he wishes to render. The call for volunteers forestalls any from saying they never had a chance, while on the other hand, it helps the leader to utilize his forces to the fullest possible extent.

UNION PRAYER MEETING

250. Where the spirit of cooperation exists among the churches of any community, it will further help to magnify the great essentials upon which we agree, and minimize the nonessentials concerning which we differ, to hold union prayer meetings once every three months. This service should rotate among the churches. The time and place of each meeting should determine the details.

PRISON, HOSPITAL, AND KINDRED PRAYER MEETINGS

251. Prayer meeting folks are the very ones to hold prison, hospital, shop, mission, and rescue home prayer meetings. The reason many have not done this kind of work lies in the fact that they have not been led to do it. The leader should meet the opportunity his community affords in this line by enlisting his company for this gracious work, and sending them forth in small bands. He, himself, should not stay behind. Those who go will give, get, and bring a blessing.

RECITATION

252. Delight your prayer meeting family by having some one give a recitation. The pleasure of this exercise will be equaled by the profit which comes not only to the hearers but to the reader as well. And, since the recitation, like every other exercise, should not be contributed for its own, but for the prayer meeting's sake, the leader should see to it that the selection is in harmony with the prayer meeting spirit and that it is appropriate for the particular occasion, whether patriotic, temperance, missionary, or any other.

CREED AND CATECHISM

253. The leader may very appropriately introduce short studies of the creed and catechism into the prayer meeting. The presentation of these great documents of the church will not only be a pleasure to those who have previously studied them, but will give pleasure and be of profit to those, and the number of such is too large by far, who have not given adequate time to their consideration.

PRAYER LIST

254. It is the privilege of Christians to be laboring for the salvation of souls always. Enlist your prayer meeting company definitely in this work. To this end provide each attendant with a "prayer list" card, that is, a card with a simple promise, pledging daily prayer and faithful personal effort for the salvation of those in whom the holder of the card is especially interested, followed by blank spaces for their names. Let the owners of the cards keep them in their Bibles as constant reminders of their privilege and duty.

MEMORY WORK

255. Have some memory work in your prayer meeting. Certainly. It will be worth

while. Very few of us ever take time to memorize a great thought from the world's best thinking about divine things, a stanza of some hymn, or even a verse of Scripture. We drift. Most of us, however, would be pleased if some one were to set us at the task, especially so, if they were to provide time for it and help us in its doing. Here lies the prayer meeting leader's opportunity.

256. Gather your quotations from the Bible, the Hymnal, and from the world's devotional literature. Be a school teacher for five minutes. Use the blackboard and pointer. Have individuals read the quotation; drill by sections, by ages; repeat in unison with and then without the blackboard. Review upon the week following. Young and old will like it and will carry out into life to enrich it forever some of the choicest "gems" of Holy Scripture and of the hymnology of the church, and some of the most sublime expressions of devotion which have sprung from the lips of devout men through all the ages.

PRAYER MEETING SCRAPBOOK

257. Have a prayer meeting scrapbook. The use of such a volume, so common in our homes,

will help emphasize the homelike and family feeling that should characterize every prayer meeting; and, besides, the things that go into it will make it of great interest and value in later years. A substantial volume of the loose-leaf variety will serve this purpose admirably.

258. Divide your book into departments, and at the top of each place a neat heading. You will want at least the eleven following:

(1) *Our spiritual birthdays.* Under this head have each attendant write his or her name, together with the date and place of their conversion. Those who cannot give exact dates may give approximate time. This simple record will not only be intensely interesting, but will also magnify the great experience of the new birth.

(2) *Record of attendance.*

(3) *Record of Scripture used.*

(4) *Answered prayer.* Those who make acknowledgment of answered prayers in the meeting should be encouraged to put the same into writing in not more than one hundred words for preservation in the scrap-book. Some who desire to acknowledge answers will not desire to give details. To accommodate such have a page headed thus: "*We acknowledge answers to our prayers,*" and under this head merely enroll the names.

(5) *Memory gems.* The quotations memorized by the company should be placed here.

(6) *Clippings.* Men gather the best of all literature and publish it for profit; the prayer meeting company may do the same for spiritual profit. When some sub-

ject, as love, joy, peace, goodness, hope, mercy, faith, home, heaven, or any other suitable for this purpose, is announced, request the company to bring clippings or extracts which they have copied from their reading to be read in the service. After the reading give them permanent place in the scrapbook.

(7) *Visitors' page.* Upon this page enter the names and addresses of visitors.

(8) *Letters from absent ones.*

(9) *Letters from former attendants.*

(10) *Letters from missionaries.*

Under these last three heads place all letters which belong to them respectively.

(11) *Illustrations.* In this department place all pictures brought to the prayer meeting for the purpose of illustrating missionary or other subjects.

259. Being merely a repository of the things which are contributed by the attendants to the service, the scrapbook itself should have a very inconspicuous place in the meeting. Keep it where those present may have the privilege of examining it in the social moments before or after the service.

260. The care of the scrapbook should be in the hands of a custodian, or secretary, preferably some young person, appointed by the leader.

THE CHURCH PAPER

261. The church paper is one of the pastor's most efficient assistants. Weekly it widens

the vision, deepens the sympathies, and nurtures devotion. Invite those who receive it to share it with your company by setting apart twenty minutes of an appointed evening in which they may tell in their own words, briefly, what thing in some recent issue has appealed to them. Supplement, as may be needed, from your own marked copy, the contributions of others. A church paper "atmosphere" will thus be created which will not only interest and bless for the moment, but will, when the canvass is made, add new names to the list of those whose homes welcome this helper in holy things.

PRINTING

262. Whatever printing you have done for your prayer meeting, see that it is neat and attractive. If so it will please; and whatever pleases, draws. It will cost more, of course, but you can well afford to pay the difference.

CHAPTER XII
THE BENEDICTION

PARAGRAPH

263. Should be appropriate.
264-278. Forms of benediction:
265. Apostolic benediction.
266. Protestant benediction.
267. The Lord's Prayer.
268. Extempore prayer.
269. Scripture.
270. Hymn.
271. Israel's ancient formula.
272. "A good meeting to-night."
273. "Glad to see you."
274. "Quaker" benediction.
275. Aaronic benediction.
(1) Epworth League.
(2) Baptist Young People's Union.
276. Mizpah, The United Society of Christian Endeavor benediction.
277. The "Gloria."
278. A benediction indeed.

CHAPTER XII

The Benediction

"Thy blessing is upon thy people."—Psalm 3. 8.

263. If a prayer meeting whose freshness and beauty have been enhanced by the variety which has been put into it is to maintain its spirit, the element of happy surprise should be in it to the very end. That means that the benediction must not become stereotyped. Different prayer meetings call for different kinds of benediction, and it is wise to use them. Since the leader cannot know what turn the meeting will take, so he cannot with certainty tell beforehand which benediction will be most suitable. For instance, if the meeting seems (mark you, the word is "seems") to fall flat, he could not very appropriately use the exercise in which each is to say to the other, "We have had a good meeting to-night," for while no service of prayer really fails, there would be some to whom such a benediction would be meaningless, and, for them, out of place. The benediction should graciously crown the happy

hour. To this end the leader should thoroughly familiarize himself with all the forms of dismissal, so that if the one he had intended to use should not comport with the spirit of the meeting he may use another. Happily, benedictions are so numerous, and their character so varied, as to adequately meet every demand the spirit of the meeting may lay upon them.

264. Both leader and company will find pleasure and profit in the use of the following:

265. The apostolic benediction, 2 Cor. 13. 14:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

266. The following, full of grace and beauty, taken chiefly from Scripture; a part of it from Phil. 4. 7, the remainder a paraphrase upon Num. 6. 24, 25, by its wide use among Protestant churches, may very properly be called the Protestant benediction:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

267. Have all unite in repeating the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Any other prayer suitable for the purpose and familiar to all may be used in like form.

268. Let the leader or some other person dismiss with extempore prayer.

269. Let the closing be with some passage of Scripture, such as:

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

270. While singing a familiar hymn have a general handshake; or, have the handshake after the singing. A beautiful and appropriate closing for the Agape Prayer Meeting (paragraphs 227-230) is for the company, like the disciples when they left the upper room

in Jerusalem, after singing a hymn, to go out, quietly, dispensing with the usual social half hour.

271. Liken the going forth of the prayer meeting company to the moving forward of Israel when on the way to Canaan, and then unitedly from memory repeat Israel's ancient formula, Num. 10. 35:

> Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

This is a militant but glorious benediction, fit indeed for saints who "must fight if they would reign."

272. When one of those glorious occasions is enjoyed in which every one without exception feels the blessedness of it, have everyone shake hands with at least three persons and say to each, "We have had a good meeting to-night." The mere saying so will bless hearts and prepare them to repeat it on the morrow out in the world.

273. It may be truly said that everyone who attends prayer meeting is glad to see the neighbors and friends and especially strangers present, but how few ever say so! Here is a chance for training in that beautiful courtesy. Have

each one say to at least three others while shaking hands with them, "I am glad to see you to-night." Formality, if indeed it lingers to this moment, will be quickly dispelled by this expression of appreciation.

274. That which in some parts is called the "Quaker benediction" makes a delightful closing. It is a prayer couched in Quaker phraseology, whose petitions are for the richest things in grace—the blessing of God, his keeping, and that in all its fullness. Its use never fails to bless. Have each one shake hands with at least three others and say to each, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, and give thee a shouting blessing." If when this benediction is used somebody says "Praise the Lord!" or "Hallelujah!" it will not spoil the closing.

275. The Aaronic benediction, Num. 6. 24-26, may be used according to the forms followed by two great societies of young people. (1) The Epworth League, thus:

Leader.	The Lord bless thee and keep thee.
Response.	*The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.*
All.	The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

(2) And the Baptist Young People's Union, thus:

All repeat. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace."

276. Use the "Mizpah," Gen. 31, 49, of the United Society of Christian Endeavor:

All repeat. "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another."

277. The "Gloria" makes a beautiful benediction. Use it thus:

Leader. Glory be to the Father,
Response. *Glory be to the Father,*
L. Glory be to the Son,
R. *Glory be to the Son,*
L. Glory be to the Holy Ghost;
R. *Glory be to the Holy Ghost;*
L. As it was in the beginning,
R. *As it was in the beginning,*
L. Is now, and ever shall be,
R. *Is now, and ever shall be,*
L. World without end. Amen.
R. *World without end. Amen.*
All sing the entire "Gloria."

278. When the meeting is crowned with the conversion of souls, let the dismissal center about the new converts by every one shaking

hands with them and wishing them well in the Christian life. Shake hands with each other; rejoice together, and sing, and shout, and keep God's heavenly host company, for "likewise shall joy be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." A benediction like this is a benediction indeed!

O thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way;
The path of prayer thyself hath trod:
Lord, teach us how to pray!

—*James Montgomery.*

APPENDIX

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